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Failure. |

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# S A M P L E

Also by Robert Edwards:

*Euthanasia: Dailey County Weekly Times  
(Letters to the Editor)*

*Re:MISC (2021 Album)  
(as Rob51Design)*

S

Robert Edwards'

**FAILURE!**

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E

# SAMPLE

01

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The world ended on a Tuesday.

There wasn't any tension, it just happened. There was no apocalyptic event, no meteor, the sun didn't explode, and the humans didn't bicker themselves into a nuclear holocaust. The world just stopped; Stopped turning on its axis, as if it were tired.

For about 50 years it slowed. Relative gravity increased: Without the centripetal force of its spin, people crumpled under their own weight. As they struggled to breathe, the last surviving humans laid with their backs to the earth and heard from their barometric graves the planet go quiet.

On a fucking Tuesday.

I guess Monday got the short end of the stick.

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# SAMPLE

02

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A

75 years before it stopped spinning, Piper Paisley, a farmer's daughter, stopped a globe with her finger and decided that this was where she was going to spend the rest of her life.

It just so happened that her finger landed in the middle of a big expanse of water known as the Pacific Ocean.

3 years prior, a beluga calf was born off the coast of Borneo to an octogenarian cow with decaying vision. Within weeks, she was harpooned by a businessman named Karl McKay.

17 years after the planet stopped spinning, all but one adult human male had died. He spent the last moments of his life rubbing one out with his back on the ground, and his head buried in a bearskin rug. He had been a banker.

What a way out.

Now, that wasn't the absolute *last* of the humans.

They'd prepared. Peppered hundreds of spore-like colonies across the solar system. Like pods from a bloom, they exploded to various resting places across the galaxy.

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The Major Vessels left the planet within the first years of slow-down. Two didn't make it through launch.

The Kennedy Ark launched in May and came down after barely breaching the stratosphere. My Fair Lady launched the following June, but a thrust miscalculation caused a fall from just below orbit, onto a small suburb in Texas, leveling everything in a 60-mile radius. The rotation of Earth had been a constant force for the hundreds of years of propulsion science. It was an easy, devastating mistake.

Some of the ejected crafts suffered insulation issues. In the final years, as supplies depleted, crafts got smaller, crews less informed, and the number of homemade rockets and citizen casualties skyrocketed.

The longer we went, the slower we spun, the heavier we got, relatively speaking.

Of the surviving crews, ten made it out of the solar system, and of those only two managed to completely survive the 50-year hibernation. And of those two, only One ship made it to a system with a planet capable of sustaining life. And by the time it arrived, the "life" on board had changed so completely that life as it previously existed was nearly impossible with a constant gravitational pull.

Within a month of arriving on a stable alien planet, Humans died from the stresses on the heart of an increased gravity.

The very last Humans died of cardiac arrest in an attempt to save one of their own from having fallen into a lake.

Cute.



# SAMPLE

# SAMPLE

# 03

SA

The thing about humans is that they can't exist on their own. It's a byproduct of evolution: It shows that they're smart, that they build things to do the work for them. Building little machines to make things easier, or inventing these things called "laws" or "rules" to trick each other into being the machines for them. They're very good at this process. It's called "progress".

"Progress" began as an attempt to fend off the wild and to procure shelter, and to cultivate food. But soon, once the wild world was tamed, they used Progress not for work, but for keeping themselves entertained and pleased. In this way they made themselves Gods, and they made each other praise them and their ideas. Machines still working together toward a common cause. But the new commodity was no longer tangible, like food or shelter. The new product was imaginary.

These-

MA

# SAMPLE

# SAMPLE

“Please...”

My editor looked down over her rimmed glasses. “This won’t win *anything*.”

“I’m not trying to *win anything*, I’m trying to *change the world*.”

There was a chill in her silence.

“Look”, she said. Her glasses moved from her nose to her desk. “I’m going to be blunt- Stories about *the future*, about Sci-Fi characters in Sci-Fi situations just don’t sell anymore.”

She put her hand on mine, and looked me deep in the eyes:

“We *are* trying to make money here.”

...

The front window of the book store was filled with books about young people in young people situations. Falling in and out of love, running away together, raising puppies, hating their families, and ultimately learning lessons about themselves and what it means to be an adult.

Fuck that shit.

Hidden away in the back corner next to the section of sexual positions and tantric orgasmic yoga was a dwindling shelf of science fiction odysseys.

A man in a black t-shirt blocked the aisle with his body, looking like he’d just been caught with his hand in the cookie jar.

He apologized through his acne-  
“I thought this was Manga...”.

# SAMPLE

# SAMPLE



01

SA

She was in love. She didn't know his name, yet, but she knew He was the one. He smelt like bread, and he bought avocados and sriracha and had those marks on his pants like he'd been painting all day.

The grocery store was the perfect place to meet. Her friends met in bars, and their relationships reflected this- quick, loud, ending in a hangover.

But if you were to meet someone in a grocery store, just by chance, then chances are you'd be together forever. Without issues, without preconceived notions. Just two people meeting in a place as they are. Two open souls in a world of miscommunication and heightened personalities that meet as they are. Open, truthful and- - -

AM

# SAMPLE

“No.”

“No?” I was genuinely confused. “This is exactly what you asked for—”

“No.” She holds up a copy of *Fifty Shades of Grey*. “People want sex. They want to watch each other fuck, suffer, and fuck *again*, to be put through hell to get what they want.”

“Not *all* people. And the people that *do* already have *that*.”

“You think they’ll stop there? Every book they read just feeds the addiction. You use drugs?”

“No—”

“Of course you do, you’re a writer.”

She sets the book down, and clasps her fingers together.

“Books, *entertainment*, they’re *all* drugs. If people can’t find what they *need*, they keep... Chasing the dragon... No?”

“I get it”

“Good. Do *this*—” Slapping *Fifty Shades*.

I hate her.

# SAMPLE

02

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His cock was warm against my back.

I wanted him to cum inside me.

But not yet.

Right now, he was tied to the- - -

# SAMPLE

“I can't. It's not me.”

Her silence was deafening. She put the papers in her suitcase, stood, and offered me her hand-

“It was a nice try.”

And left.

...

The first of my allowances was gone by the end of the week. I'd spent it on food, mostly. I had thought about taking the money and running, so to speak. Accepting my first check, going west, driving until I ran out of gas, and just setting up camp there, somewhere off of I-40.

But that plan fizzled quickly. I needed electricity. I'm a creature of comfort. Beds in houses are comfier than beds of trucks.

So here I sit, in a coffee shop, sending my first draft out to potential publishers. Harper Collins, Scholastic... Anyone who'll read it.

Hopefully someone will bite.

...

# SAMPLE



**The Girl  
In  
The Ocean**

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P  
L  
E

# SAMPLE



When her finger stopped on the globe, she was expecting someplace exotic. But when it finally slowed, it landed a little left of center of the Pacific Ocean.

But she had promised to go wherever her finger had landed, so “a little left of center” is where she went.

...

Most of her belongings went to a local pawn shop, and the rest in an estate sale to the landowners. It was enough to buy her a train ticket to the coast, and a crew. She found a group of Nigerian fishermen who had come to the states in a series of events that she never quite understood, but they spoke English well enough to get by, and she traded them food for the voyage.

...

After seven weeks on the open sea they dropped anchor at “a little left of center”, and she stood on deck, looking for something significant.

She breathed in the salty air, contemplating, and, after some time, climbed overboard and drowned.

She'd left a note on the back of a wrapper:

“Someday it will all stop. Today it stops for me. Someday it will stop for all of us.”

# SAMPLE

02

AS

The first response I got was a negative one- Scholastic thought the content was too crude to publish.

“It’s just not our target demographic”, they’d said. That was understandable, but hey, at least they’d read it.

I inquired about leads as to who else to send it to, to which they responded ‘they’d get back to me’, which they never did.

My sister read the first two chapters, which was promising. However, her review was not:

“I do not understand sci-fi. Nor do I understand the structure of this book, and there also happens to not be a plot.”

“The plot starts in the third chapter” I told her. That was probably true, it was somewhere in there, “I don’t remember the specific breaks. I just wrote the story in one straight shot.”

“Then cut the first two chapters. Your book should start when the story starts.”

M

# SAMPLE

~~03~~

01

S

A

M

At first, robots were big. Remember?

Simple computations were calculated by machines that filled an entire room. These eventually became smaller. So small, in fact, that they could be injected into human veins to calculate sums as well as monitor health. Humans built them, and like everything Humans do, they built them through plagiarism.

These nanobots (as they were called) were designed based on DNA structure that Humans had studied.

There was a new strain of science that believed that evolution was the only solution to death. Through principals that mimicked natural selection, mathematicians and scientists programmed these nanobots to evolve on their own.

Whenever these nanobots would self-repair, for example,

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they would have to make a small, mechanical change. If this change proved to be beneficial, if this nanobot provided better data, lasted longer without charging, without repairs, then the change would become permanent and be sent, wirelessly, to the entire population cloud, so they could all take on the new mutation.

This evolution, at first, happened simultaneously to all members in the cloud. That is important to note.

Eventually, these nanobots found ways to interconnect. To more efficiently perform. To mine dead, unused particles- To rebuild, to procreate.

Machines building machines, an exact copy of what had been learned from the last generation. Evolutionary memory- - -

...

“So this is eventually about Zombies, right?”

“What?” I’d forgotten that she was reading along.

“The Nanobots,” she said, “Eventually they take over the human minds? That what this is about...Right?”

Sigh.

“It’s *about* the creation of life.”

She doesn’t follow.

“Basically: Human Civilization creates a new form of life. One that is... Mechanical. Humans spend years and years attempting to defeat death, and they finally *do* it, just not how they expected.”



She stares at me blankly-

“That sounds like Zombies to me...”

...

These Nanobots were incapable of building downward, of building *smaller*, so as they became more efficient, they built themselves *out*. They created new parts, some exclusively for building, some for communication, some just for storing data-

They also evolved to increase evolution by splitting into groups. So this second group (Group B) were evolving in an entirely different pattern from Group A. And this group broke off into another group, and this third group split off into a fourth group, et cetera, et cetera, all with different mutation pathways.

These groups initially shared data, evolved to communicate better, easier. But through communication, evolution slowed. When they were on the same wavelength, so to speak, they shared the same seed. If one unit evolved for a specific task, but that evolution interfered with the rest of the group, that ‘recessive’ evolution would be overwritten. So, by happenstance (or good programming) they evolved apart. After a few generations, the self-sustaining cells were incompatible with the rest of the group.

...

“So now it’s about racism?”

Head in my hands-

“No, it’s about the Evolution of Evolution. About one form life creating an entirely different form of life. It’s about how life

could exist independent of a Creator.”

“But, in your story there *is* a creator. Humans create the Nanobots-”

“Yes. When I say ‘without’ a creator, I mean ‘in *lieu* of’. It’s about how life can exist long past its inception.”

“Oh... Well I don't think that's clear. Maybe you should say that.”

...

After the Humans were gone, these systems faced their hardest challenge. They were built to save Human lives, but Human lives were a limited engagement.

Death caught up to the human race quickly after it caught up to the planet Earth.

The last Human's thoughts were kept alive, bouncing between the nanobots in his cranium on the surface of the earth on the bearskin run, charging in the perpetual sunlight. But the cells that handled thoughts and new memories were no longer useful, so they evolved outward.

As the bodies decayed, they thrived off of the energy of the sun, and altered themselves to this new source of energy, independent of the Human shackles for which they were forged.

The structures and systems they adapted were similar to algae at first, but evolved so they could store energy even when the earth was in its half-year of darkness- - -

...

“Alright, I think I get it. And they're going to keep evolving, right? You don't have to tell us every step. I'm already bored.”

“But that's the nature of evolution, a slow process.”

She dropped it on the counter, and left. She said she wouldn't read it until it was interesting again.

That's when I added the Whale.

...

The trick was being a day or two ahead of the sun. When the sun starts to peak around the horizon, the surface explodes with krill. The other herds were days away, fighting each other to eat the most. He preferred to be out by himself. Less chance of getting hurt.

...

I always thought it'd be funny to write a book about a whale. There's only one other story that I know of *about* a whale. You know the one. The great white Dick. There are plenty of stories *with* whales, but only one *about* one. So I thought it'd be cool to be the *other* story about a whale.

I don't know anything about whales. I know that they're great, for example. And that they can be either White, Blue, or Beluga.

Or Sperm... But writing a book about a Sperm whale is just asking for trouble.

Oh! Or a killer whale!

Shit. Free Willy. Make that 2 stories about Whales. I always forget that one....

What about a book about a Beluga that murders its family? I'd call it "Killer Whale", but it'd be about a Beluga?

I should just stop right there. I'll never top that.

...

One day, in the future, a fan of mine in his late 30's would tell me that the Whale was his favorite character, and ask me why he didn't get more screen-time. He would then tell me he was a big-shot producer in Hollywood, and that he would like to option the rights to tell the story on the big screen. We'd have to change the name, but he promised to keep the rest of the story intact. Of course I'd agree, but I'd die before it ever came to fruition. I doubt I'd have missed much.

...

04

02

# SAM

My Favorite Book

My favorite book is a book about the death of the human race. The planet stops spinning, and people fly away into space in giant rockets but not every person is on one of them so the people that are left have to die.

I like it because it is interesting and because I have never read a book like it. The writing is okay.

My favorite character is a whale named Bilbo Baggins. He likes to eat krill, but has to stay away from the other whales because he is too smart for them. He lives in the ocean so he can stay alive even if the planet stops spinning.

There are a few other characters like a lady and man, but

they aren't as interesting because they are just regular people. Bilbo has magical powers so he can fly. And not just underwater.

He eventually finds a treasure and has to fight a dragon in order to save all of the other whales that he feels sorry for, but they eventually find him and blame him for it, so they kill him like Jesus.

It's a sad story, but then it's okay at the end because he gets reincarnated by little robots and gets to kill everyone and live happily ever after all by himself.

I'd say that this is my favorite book. The setting is the sea and earth. The Main character is a whale and some people, and the conflict is that the whale has to save people and then kill them all.

It's called "Failure". I think a more better title would be "The Whale That Could Fly".

It has a weird ending. Like this paper.

Broccoli.

...

"So what are you doing for money?", she asked me. I was sitting in her kitchen, wearing her robe, eating her cereal.

"Currently? Looking for a publisher."

"For this bullshit?" She'd read the first whale chapter.

"It's all I have."



...

Being a whale is fun. I've only been a member of the dolphin family for a few years now, but it sure beats having been a walrus- - -

...

I got the call in the morning. A second interview with a prolific executive. I couldn't refuse.

He doesn't wear cologne, or antiperspirant. He's a big guy, sweaty, though definitely in charge.

When he speaks, he speaks in whistles, and almost moans with the amount of effort it takes for him to squirm in his chair.

The plaque on his desk reads "Moe Sherman: Count Dracula".

No it doesn't.

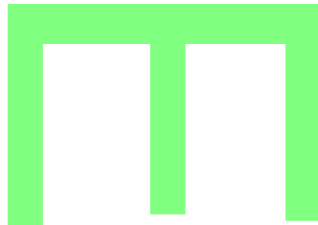
"I'm definitely interesting in your book about space".

So far so good.

"However, we can't publish books with so much cursing. We'd like to give it to one of our editors and get it down to a Pre-K level. Turn it into a series!"

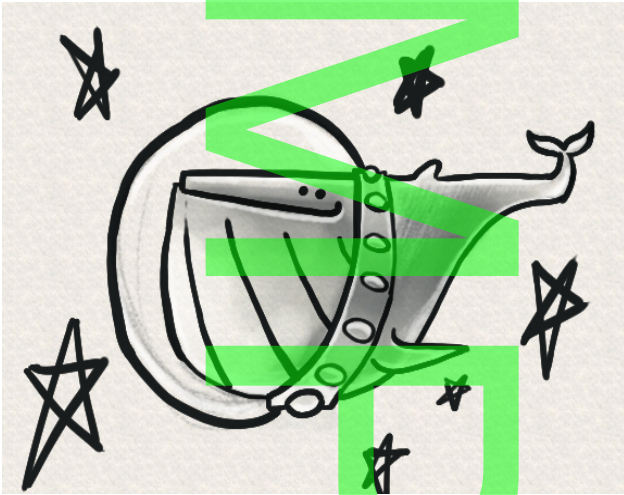
"A book series?"

"No:" he holds up a placard -



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“A cartoon series!”

...

The series didn't make it past its pilot. Kids didn't quite grasp the 'lone whale at the end of the universe' concept. By the end of the studio's notes, the cartoon had evolved to one where Mimsy (the new lead whale) was *actually* a little girl that had been *transformed into* a whale by an *evil warlock*, and had to use her *space whale powers* to make the planet spin again.

Regardless, it didn't test well.

...

“Write something else. You're making us more poor.”

All the cereal is gone.

“Write another book about that whale.”

I'd remembered another whale story: Jonah. That makes three. Still a tiny bunch, but one that I'm proud to be a part of. I tell her-

“That's great. Why aren't you writing?”

# SAMPLE

~~05~~

~~03~~

01

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The mountain sank into the sea. At the top of the mountain was a hand, made of sky. From the mountaintop he looked me in the eye as the last living man, and whispered in my ear-

“Don't be afraid.”

And at that moment I knew I couldn't trust him- - -

...

M

How do you get a god to fight a whale?

...

- and from the darkness, I saw the disk spinning in the water. It was glowing, pulsating, making sounds I couldn't hear, but that I could feel in my eyes.

He will have no power over me.

...

What a load of hot garbage.

...

Before the book was banned in Germany, it sold 300,000 copies worldwide.

After the banning, it sold 14 million.

Of which I saw 1.3.

...

I found a Honolulan to be my wife. We got married in Owahow or some shit like that, and she and I went on our first honeymoon around the southern coast of South America.

She almost drowned once, like the lady from before, but a seaman pulled her back on-board.

Later they fucked in the captains galley.

Later she didn't almost drown.

...

To get away with murder, the secret is knowing the right people.

...

These people were not the right people.

Sent to you from Prison.

Broccoli.



# SAMPLE

~~06~~

~~04~~

02

# S A M E E M

The algae grows into grass, grass into trees, trees become forests-

And from the forests come animals. And the animals grow, and as they grow they evolve. They question themselves, they learn, they look. They become aware- This new consciousness learns curiosity, pokes in, sees cells, studies them-

There's no beginning, no end. No evidence of us, no evidence of what's preceded, just as to us there's no evidence of what's to come. Is there a reason there should be?

You might feel like you have some stake in their creation, but that's human ego. They've done it all themselves, evolving, expanding, and you're still looking for some sense of gratitude, some form of acknowledgment for your involvement. This is where God lies, in the recursion of the universe. If you dive deep enough inside, you'll arrive at the edge, staring at yourself in the center.

It's egotistical, but hell, any belief in a creator is egotistical. Someone would create you on purpose? Please.

...

"Alright, let me level with ya. This doesn't sell... It can't sell. No one in their right mind would read this. If they've gotten this far, they should just go back and read it again, because that last paragraph was a palindrome."

"You're a fucking liar."

"You're right."

And that's when I stabbed him in the heart.

...



Dear Mom,

You won't believe what I seen today. A man got stabbed in the heart. He didn't make it, though. He's dead.

I just wanted to tell you that he was dead.

And I couldn't help him.

And now I'm dead too.

~Your Dead Son

...

“The teenage suicide rate is second only to the teenage masturbation rate. Amirite?”

...

“This last bit doesn't make any sense”.

She's expecting continuity.

“You're expecting continuity.”

She immediately regrets her decision to listen to my thoughts, and she retreats into the background.

“I do not! This isn't funny.”

Oh yeah? How about:

**Hello. My name is Charles Xavier. You have been selected to be a part of our training program. The Ex-men program. Please allow us to remove your balls.**

...

And thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges.

...

Needless to say, the first draft didn't sell so well.

# SAMPLE

# SAMPLE

# CHAPTER

## 3

“So I have a few ideas to reignite your writing career”

My sister. Trying to be helpful.

“First, there's a writing contest-”

“No.”

“You haven't even looked at it yet-”

“It's a scam. It's always a scam. They just collect money from poor wannabes and randomly pick a winner. I've heard about it tons of times. It's the same thing they do to screenwriters-writers-iters-iters-iters-iters...”<sup>i</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> This will make more sense in the movie version.

**Ahem.**

“What else?”

“Well, there's a speaking event at the community colle-”

“Never ever in a million years.”

“But it's for a charity.”

“There isn't any money in charity work.”

“There's Karma...”

I can't even think of a response.

“Well, then what about this?”

She hands me a pamphlet. Where is everyone getting pamphlets?

“Local art student, looking for words to illustrate.”

“This guy made a pamphlet?”

“Interested?”

# SAMPLE

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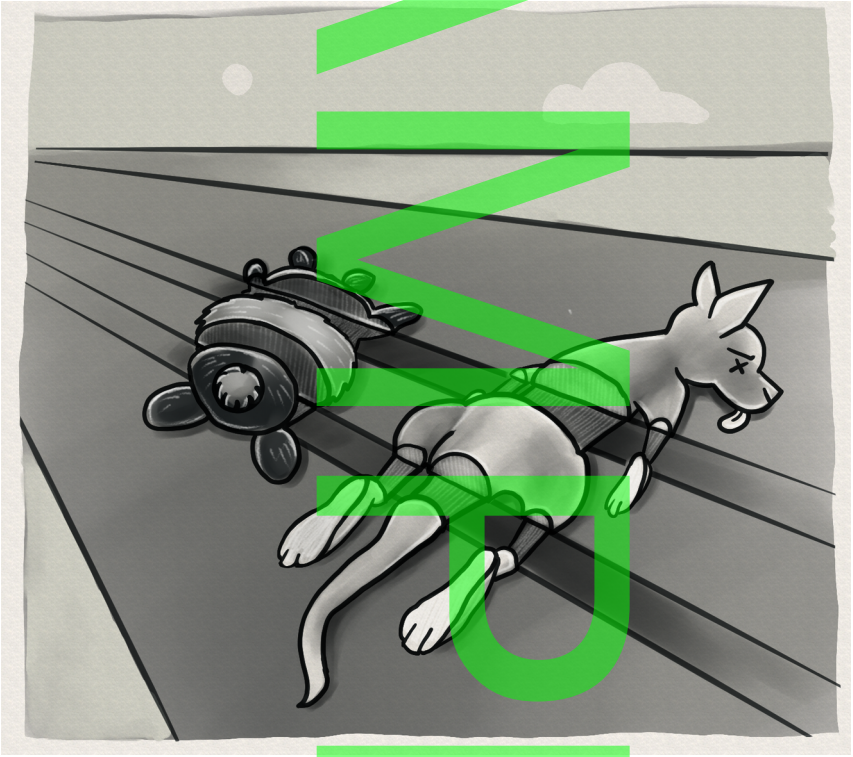
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Louie was a kangaroo,

Louie had a friend named Stu.

Stu and Lou went out to play.

They didn't look the other way.<sup>ii</sup>

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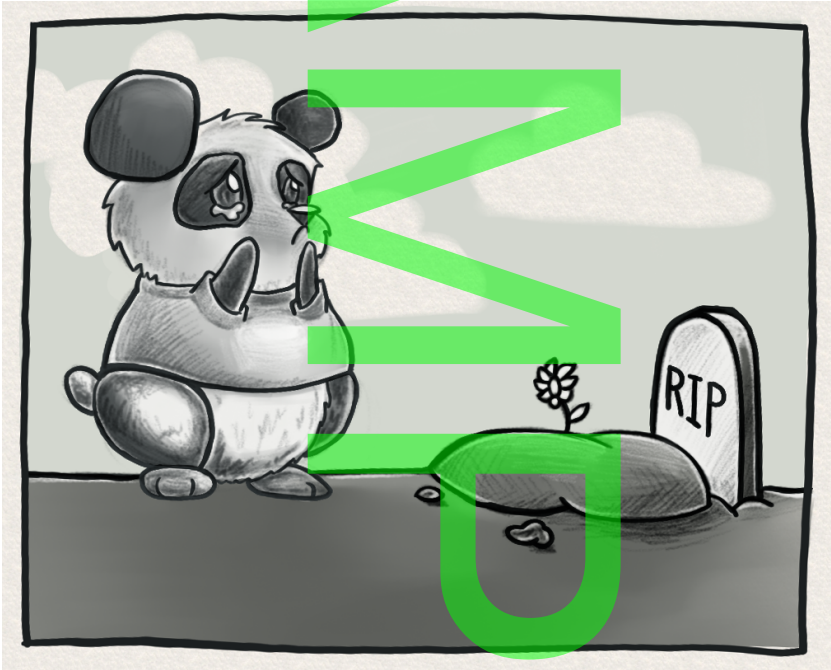
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ii This is a story about looking both ways before you cross the street.

S

A

Aww...



Poor Puppy...

L

M

S

A

Larry Panda had a pet,

He took it to the doggy vet.

He said it wouldn't make a peep,

So they had puppy put to sleep.<sup>iii</sup>

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iii Self-explanatory.

These were banned almost instantly. (everywhere except Germany, strangely enough). I only spent an afternoon on them, but the artist spent weeks making these terrifically sad illustrations.<sup>iv</sup>

They became a hot commodity, and I still see them occasionally pop up on Ebay.

It started a movement to have all of my works erased from history. What began as a group of Moms upset that I was scarring their children soon grew into a class action cluster-cuss. I was advised by my then-publisher to apologize and tell the world that my books weren't intended for children-

But fuck that. They're intended for anyone that reads them.

So what if the reading level is a little low? Not everyone is as smart as us types.

...

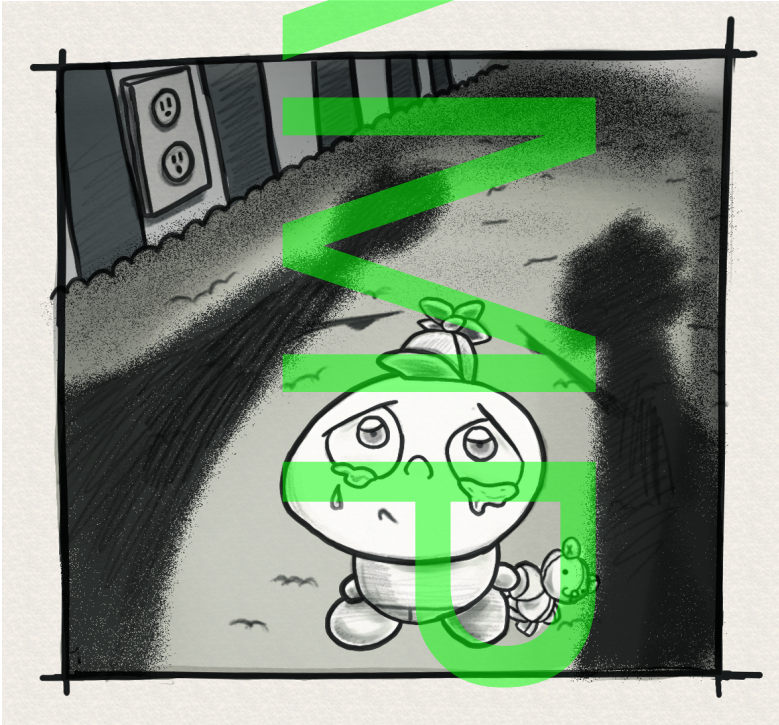
If God had written his book for children, maybe there wouldn't be so much debate about it. Or maybe that was intentional. Maybe God likes a little confusion.

---

<sup>iv</sup> It's immeasurably easier to *draw* say a fight scene than it is to write one. How would someone even *do* that? BOP! BAM! I think not. I'll stick to illustrations, thank you very much!

# SAMPLE

S  
A



Based on a True Story.

L  
M

S

A

Daddy came home late to bed,

Mommy waited up and said-

“I know who you've been fucking, Sid,

So I'm leaving, Keep the Kid.”<sup>v</sup>

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<sup>v</sup> This one is about making a new friend.

Fifteen years from the publication of the book, the artist had a gallery opening in upstate New York. The President came and bought one of his pieces. Quoted our book as having helped him get through a rough patch with his kid. He ended up cheating again in the white house. You know the one.

Still, a little cult following won't get you anywhere.

I needed a movie.

...

Paramount said no, MGM said no (and then promptly went out of business, which I wish I could lay claim to).

Universal said they didn't like my writing, but they'd love to have me on their new talking animal film as an illustrator- I left the interview.

Warner Brothers said they'd do it, but that they'd get final cut of my film.

That's fine. A \$30,000 signing bonus. The catch? It had to be a superhero movie.

"Which Superhero?"

"Which one do you want?"

"Can I make one up?"

...



# SAMSAM

THE WINNER

A Screenplay

# SAMPLE

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD, NIGHT.

A strapping young lad, BRAD WINNER catches a football from mid-air, and runs with it down the field.

He narrowly dodges opponents as they try to block him from the goal. LEFT, RIGHT, They can't keep up.

IN SLOW MOTION he crosses the threshold, and SPIKES the ball. The crowd EXPLODES in a riot, FLASHING LIGHTS of CAMERAS light up the field.

BANDSTAND, later.

A crowd surrounds BRAD as he is being interviewed-

NEWSMAN

So, Brad, You've won an all expenses paid trip to college, and your parent's couldn't be prouder.

His Parents wave proudly.

NEWSMAN

(cont)

What have you got to say for yourself?

Brad clears his throat-

BRAD

It's like my dad says, Winner's Win. And I'm a winner.

He reveals his jersey, it reads-

WINNER - 01.

The crowd goes wild.

They ate it up. A self-righteous main character is so deliciously tasty. People love tragedy. And when a main character loves himself this much, they love to watch them fail.

God I'm good.

It was interesting though, setting up a main character that couldn't fail. For brevity's sake, the story goes like this: The boy is blessed (cursed) with the power to always win, no matter what he tries. This serves him well on tests and sports- You know, stuff the PG-13 crowd would love.

But then there's a kink in his plans- the class nerd challenges him to a spelling bee, in hopes of impressing a girl.

I never said I was original.

The Nerd loses, *but*, in a show of utter masculinity, challenges Brad to a fight after school. Even though he doesn't want to fight, he still wins, causing serious injuries, and getting in trouble-

His scholarship is revoked (not lost, we can't have any plot holes in a story this water-tight), and he lands in a dead-end convenience store job occasionally playing lottos for extra cash that he spends on drugs and women. (or something more age-appropriate, this is a first draft, after all...)

During this time, The nerd has become a famous, paralyzed, anti-bullying spokesman, and he openly says he feels sorry for Brad, and challenges him to a rematch.

Why, you might ask? And the answer is the same as before. To win the girl. Class-A character development.

Brad accepts, but when he arrives the spelling bee is a ruse

for the nerd to show off his newly built robo-suit. They have an epic battle that lasts 14 beautifully illustrated pages.

It ultimately ends in Brad over the steaming pile of rubble that was his adversary:

NERD  
(through coughing)  
...You...You cheated!

BRAD  
(barely alive)  
I told you... Winners-

BLAM! Brad is SHOT IN THE FOREHEAD!!!

The smoke clears, revealing-

Brad's Parents wielding a shotgun, spilling out silver shells.

**BLACKOUT.**

...

After the credits, I had the studio add a simple graphic of a Broccoli floret, hoping that my one fan in this world would see it.