

The Chronicles
and Meditations
of Yorbis:

(Volume 1)

The Great Clown-Lord and Philosopher-King

By

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1. Happiness

As Yorbis was walking to the great Amphitheater of Nimulak, sometime in the year 23,000 B.C. (way back), a young peasant stopped to ask him a question:

"Great Yorbis, I toil and I sweat, and my wife is filled with distemper ... My job sucks (peasant ya know) ... My kids are lazy and only work 16 hours a day in the fields for me ... And ... My XBOX is broken ... the new HALO game is coming out soon ... shit ... What are your thoughts Sir?"

Yorbis, The Great Clown Lord-King, Replied:

"Buddy, you are thinking too hard about this shit, and you sound like a little bitch... You do what you can, as you have the resources to - like the rest of us! Get yourself a good woman (or man), try to work, try to save, eat well, drink moderately (smoke some weed if you like) and try to find as much happiness in this life as you can. Life is short, and my tolerance for your bullshit and complaining is shorter... So sayest Yorbis."

Yorbis then hit the peasant - upon the head - with his cane (as folks were apt to do to peasants in olden times), and wandered on.

2. On being "fired", "down-sized", "canned" or "laid-off"

One day, long ago ...

The great Clown Lord-King Yorbis was working as a software engineer for a company that made/designed Terminal Operations Software -- systems which manage the planning and orchestration of container moves at container terminals, port facilities, rail yards, inter-modal sites, etc ... Kind of boring and out of place and without context... So be it... This story doesn't have to make sense to everyone - shut up!

Any ways, the boss of Yorbis, Nob "The Anus-Troll", came to a team meeting and began to speak the following words (Nob brought his toady [Hungus](#) along with him):

"Listen guys, this is crunch time, we really need you to step up to the bat... Get'er done... I mean it... We are in trouble, no, not trouble... We just need to get a lot of work done in a short time or something bad happens. Yes... That's it... And, dudes, I have gift cards and [free pizza](#) and all sorts of other shit if you guys can just pull it together and get this done.. While it is true that my incompetence in planning and managing got us to this point, I really think that you folks could simply work around my being a total douche... Ya know, cuz my name is Nob -- and that sort of means douche anyways... So no false advertising with respect to my being an asshole - it's in my name... Are there any questions? Really... I mean it... I want feedback... I'm not just saying it.. I really want to hear from you..."

Hungus stood by and merely nodded when Nob said something.

Yorbis listened, as the other under-folk code-monkey slaves sat frozen and slack-jawed and clearly

distraught ... and Yorbis decided to direct a set of questions to Nob:

"Firstly, KNOB, I hope I can call you Knob? I think you feel guilty about being incompetent, but I wonder if you can explain to me WHY we under-folk, being non fully-fledged peoples, should give a shit about your predicament? What you need are stakeholders, what you breed here are toady types and slaves. If you want free, creative, men and women to help you then you must create an environment for that. Secondly, if we are so important to your organization, why are you shipping jobs - KNOB - to Rasbania? Really, the Rasbanians are tools and know not how to compile code, let alone test it? Finally, you corral all the under-folk in one side of the builder-torium, while the 'splendids' are segregated to the other side, do you NOT realize that this is a douche thing to do and creates division where none should exist?"

A scowl grew across Nob's face, and after a few moments words dripped out - and some drool ...

"Well, we don't have extra cave space, Yorbis ... You know this ... That's why all the under-folk are corralled in the swine-yard.. Also, I would really like to make you all 'real people', splendids, but my bosses just won't allow it right now ... we are 50% owned by Goldman-Sachs and shit ... and, well, the Rasbanians are too damn cheap and outsourcing makes too much sense to us ... We promise, when things slow down, and times get better, and there is no need for you under-folk ... well ... WE WILL TOTALLY hire you and shit ... totally ... Yep... That sure sounds good to me and Hungus ... But... I must confess.... I do see how this could all be misinterpreted as douche behavior...."

Nob walked over and touched Yorbis on the shoulder,

"let's talk about this off line, outside the meeting, where my words can be hidden and thereby any reality can be substituted ..."

Yorbis complied...

Yorbis was fired 2 hours later...

Many years after this incident, Yorbis was giving a lecture in the great Amphitheater of TORVIS and he was asked, by a young student, "what shame is there in being fired, ya know, canned?"

Yorbis pondered this question for a moment and then spoke:

"If you have experienced the horror of watching someone you love die, slowly, painfully, over many months ... That person ... That body ... Observing that loved-one fall apart ... day by excruciating day ... As I have, and I must confess, not bravely - as I watched my sister and mother ravaged by late stage cancer ... Well ... It forces you to consider how lame, ridiculous, our 'professional' lives are - how unimportant the 'project timeline' is. And, during that death you witness, you stop, you quiet yourself before those you love and you try to listen - I mean really listen to what they want to recall at the end, to the wisdom they seek to impart ... What thoughts occur to those you love when their time is measured in hours, seconds? Well, in the listening, you begin to realize that life is not simply short, but more importantly - every moment in our lives is not equal. Some moments suck, some moments don't, such is life. It isn't obedience and the acceptance of slavery which animates memory in the final moments. It isn't our willingness to participate in sloth or sloppiness or shameful ugliness which is the most valued at the end. It isn't the memory of cars or planes or boats or iPhones or

other kinds of shit we collect, as clowns, over time. In fact, as you die, you will realize that your life's value and memories, in purest form, are not comprised of watching television, playing games or buying pizza. Your life's value, its freedom, its dignity, lay in the choice of 'who' and 'whom' you associate with and those choices you make which impact others. Those decisions you make weave a tapestry of existence, a cloth to be cherished."

"Your friends, your neighbors, your family, these are the witnesses which stand at the crossroad -- they tell the story and buy passage across the river Styx for your life's work ..."

"And what of 'work' and 'professions'? So much of our short lives is spent in work - should not work have meaning? So much of our energy is spent in labor - should not the labor build beauty? Not all jobs are the same, but why do we assume one job is important and another irrelevant? Would it not be better if we considered every productive act to be, potentially, a work of art? A good job is more than income, it is membership in a tribe -- and ideally it is a tribe of artists ... Tribes have leaders, sometimes many ... Not all leaders are qualified, especially in Information Technology -- it sucks, but it is true. Leadership is hard."

"Leadership IS hard precisely because to lead you must be in charge of a group of free people and not simply zombies or robots who act on your every whim. Zombies are dumb and are not likely to help you design something amazing -- even if they can be managed as brute labor. Zombies eat brains, they don't generally have them. The leader who expects respect or admiration for simply showing up and occupying a seat, well, that leader is a tool and not a useful tool, like a hammer or a wrench."

"My young students, don't worry about being fired or laid off or losing your job ... Don't let this fear of unemployment guide your morality or choices ... Many douche bags, in the past, used fear of 'losing their job' as an excuse to do some pretty heinous shit ... Many horrible leaders use fear to compel obedience -- this is the path of evil."

"What does Yorbis think of being canned???"

"Yorbis has been fired many times, Yorbis has quit jobs or resigned many more times. Yorbis has memories of dignity, freedom, creativity and hope - whether Yorbis was canned or quit. Yorbis simply wants to build and create value for customers, to make money and to do so in an ethical way. Sadly, not everyone has similar values, so should Yorbis abandon his values (and his mind) at the factory parking lot? [Deming didn't think so, and neither does Yorbis...](#)"

"You follow your heart and your values and sometimes a job doesn't work out - so be it. You still, probably, have some good memories of teamwork and creativity and mentorship before being ostracized (fired) and in all likelihood, if you did the right thing, you left your mark - you are remembered with love by more than a few. These memories will be of greater value at death than a few more paychecks my peoples ..."

"And, never forget:"

"Life is a series of experiments and it is usually the failed experiments that are the most interesting. Don't stress over failed experiments, revel over the joy and adventure each one brought..."

And Yorbis finished his lecture and skulked away ...

And his students discussed beer and weed and getting laid.

3. On being confident...

Several hundred years ago, in the far-off land of Trylipia, the great Clown Lord-King Yorbis was bungee jumping into the deep canyons of Rimbus - canyons where poisonous Fester-Ants and Ryme-Snakes run willy-nilly about, looking for unlucky bungee jumpers whose 'bungee' broke or was just a tad too long.

While standing in line, a young woman recognized Yorbis, from a scroll or some shit, and asked Yorbis a question:

"Great Yorbis, why are you always so fearless? So confident?"

Yorbis smiled.

Yorbis knew he wasn't confident, not really - and certainly not in some Lena Dunham or Hillary Clinton bitchy kind of way.

But, Yorbis also knew this woman was confused and wanted help.

So, Yorbis looked down, deep, into the canyon below ...

Yorbis could see all of the dangerous creatures moving about, feeding on the decaying bodies (and some not yet dead) of hapless bungee jumpers ...

And then Yorbis spoke:

"My dear girl ... there is no mystery here and there is very little that is special about me. I'm actually scared, almost all of the time. The answer to the riddle is quite simple: confidence is knowing you have nothing left to lose, that there is no real risk in anything ... or ... maybe ... the risks are all the same, no matter what we do ... so it doesn't really matter and we should simply let

go and jump."

Yorbis was next up, for the bungee jump.

Yorbis knew he could die, at any moment, anywhere ...

Yorbis knew, also, that there existed the merest thread holding his ghost inside his body - the thinnest veil between "life" and "death" ...

But Yorbis also knew it had always been like this, for all living things - and if they bitched about it, they tried to keep it to themselves.

When you realize all of this, you can do almost anything.

"So be it!"

And then Yorbis jumped.

4. Concerning stability, safety, and peace...

Thousands of years ago ...

A time when the world was less busy, but nearly as insane ...

Before the time of Ben Bernanke, and endless money printing, and the fucking Federal Reserve ...

When money was still worth something ...

A time, when some had more, and others had less, and there did not appear to be a reckoning as to why this was the case.

At that moment, the great Lord-King Philosopher-Clown Yorbis was sitting by the side of a turbulent river - the river Goonda, nestled within a valley, surrounded by the Mountains of Voroblok.

As Yorbis was sitting and watching the debris being washed down the great river, a young boy came up to him and bombarded Yorbis with weary questioning:

"Great Yorbis, my parents are out of work ... we are nearly out of money ... We are afraid we will lose our home ... and I need new clothes for school ... I saw my father crying last night and I did not know what to think ... I was scared ... We are all scared ... Yorbis, is there no hope? Will the world always be this scary? This dark? This unpredictable?"

Yorbis, broken from concentration, looked down at the young man (the boy looked to be 10 or 11 years old) and he smiled.

Then, after a few moments of meditation, Yorbis began to speak.

"I have no easy answers boy ... Times are tough, maybe

they have always been so ... But I ask that for a moment you sit with me here, and look at this river before us ..."

The young boy sat down next to Yorbis and looked out into the river, his eyes darted about - the boy knew there must be a lesson in this (he was sitting next to the great Yorbis after all). Yorbis waited until the boy's gaze looked still, and then he continued ...

"Look over there at the rocks which are worn smooth by the rushing water ... Look at how the water itself turns white as air is pulled in and churned by this wild place... Watch as material, stuff, things, leaves, sticks, logs, come flowing down ... Observe how the river attempts to beat any object or being into submission ... If one of those leaves, being washed down the river, were to come alive, he or she might ask: 'Why is this water so rough and dangerous? I should have washed ashore earlier - at some place where the water was still and slowly moving ... Instead I am now being pulled and tossed about ... This is too much ... Why must I endure?' The leaf might have washed ashore at the calmer point in the river my boy - some place safe ... The leaf might still decide to be washed ashore further down where the water also calms ... Young man, you are like this leaf, or at least you are feeling like this leaf now ... You are young and new and have only the dismal memories of your short life during turbulent times ... from your vantage point you see only rapids and unlike the 'lucky' leaf which fell to earth in calm waters, you have seen only the dark, rough, frightening branch of this Leviathan's flow."

"So, for you, it would seem better to move towards the calm waters where not much happens ... But trust me boy, you will become more for having felt the rapids. Your life will have greater meaning for having been tossed by the 'great

river' into which we are all thrown. Some of us are thrown in at calm times or at calm places in the great river - so be it, we cannot control this ... don't be jealous of this ... I know this does not help ... I know that times are hard and people have lost hope ... Maybe you think your friends and family have lost hope? I do not know them, but I doubt it ... They are simply tired and overwhelmed and at times we all feel the weight of this world upon us - parents much more than most people ... But, by the looks of you, you seem a strong and intelligent young man ... My inner voice tells me, and I could be wrong, but it is doubtful that I am wrong, that your parents love you and would throw themselves into the fires of destruction for you ... Do I speak the truth?"

The young boy nodded, his eyes glazed over, and a single tear ran down his face ...

"Then, young man, don't fret over being scared ... We are all scared at times ... This is the pepper in the soup ... This is what sparks the mind and gives flavor to existence! I know you may not believe me now, but in life there are many times when the water slows and the water quickens ... Learn to appreciate the slow times, and seek knowledge and build strength for the rapids -- it is during the times of calm that we must re-tool ourselves, harden the steel, mend, repair, and even branch out and grow to become more than what we are - and to seek out ways to become what we ought to be ... Learn to accept the hard/fast/turbulent times, they can be exciting and fun and you will realize this one day ... Peace and stability do not always exist in equal measure for all men and women at all moments. You need to accept this and avoid the trap of believing that some other soul may have 'more' than you or some other lives exist in times better than the times you

live in ... You may not believe this, but the 'bored and the fat' may actually envy you!"

"Most importantly: know that in the love of your family and your friends, in your creative works, and in your attempts at life (which sometimes become failures -- failures are the MOST important) - that if you are patient you WILL find yourself and you will find yourself stronger! We settle in calm times but we change and become strong in the rapids ... Courage is not an exclusive attribute of the great heroes of the past my boy ... Courage is in all of us when we accept our fear and we push it aside to struggle onwards ... We are not the leaf that gets washed ashore or tossed about my boy ... We are not the log that cracks and breaks under the force of the river ... Look out there, my young man, and know this simple truth! We are the stones, the boulders, and the granite that are shaped and weathered by the river, transformed into beauty which lasts many seasons - both rough and calm ..."

Yorbis was done talking, and the boy was smiling.

Perhaps the boy was smiling because Yorbis was done talking OR perhaps the boy had learned something.

"But the boy is smiling ...", Yorbis thought.

And that was enough for Yorbis, so Yorbis walked the boy home and then went to get a drink at a local tavern.

5. Pity and Shame

A while back, about 2,000 years ago, YORBIS the GREAT Clown-Lord King was roaming the countryside, looking for a job ...

Yorbis, being worn out from his journeys, stopped in a small town in NOXIA for the night. Noxia was located near the great Yurnal Sea. This town was FAMOUS for its Yurnal Cakes ... Very tasty...

While checking into his hotel a group of beleaguered and crestfallen workers were trudging off to the WOSTON Mines ... off in the hills, just outside of town.

A young scamp named Lars looked out into the street and laughed and then spoke ...

"Look at them, so tired, so pathetic, so poor and badly dressed ... I pity them."

Yorbis, angered by this young man, grabbed him by the ear (as adults were known to do in those days) and gave the young boy a talking to ...

"BOY, do you not know work? Are you so rich, so well off, that you will never need to work? If that is so THEN I PITY YOU! Pity, shame, these are 2 sides of the same horrid idea - that man should feel shame in work and that others should feel pity for the worker. We think we are doing some great deed when we stand in the distance and feel this 'pity' towards the poor, the hungry, the broken, the over-worked - but we are doing them NO GOOD! Instead, with our pity we bring shame to our own selves. With our pity we deny the possibility that man's dignity lay in something bigger than a job, an occupation, or some contrived role we play in this perpetual farce ..."

"Those men, who march to the mines, and make little and

take great risk for it - they are the proof that man is noble and good. They know they could choose to lay down and die, to refuse that work out of shame, but they feel no shame - they know the pride of adding something to this life, rather than just taking away. Young boy! You may one day understand that pity is folly - until that day comes know this simple truth: the only shameful work is the work that produces nothing or less than nothing. The only shameful job is the job of the lay-about."

"Pity thine own self."

The boy, whose mother had been shopping in a store next door, grabbed the boy, apologized to Yorbis, and dragged that wretched creature home for a "talking-to".

Yorbis, who saw himself in that boy - at that age - realized he might have been a bit harsh ...

But then again - perhaps Yorbis was just harsh enough.

6. Hope

Yorbis once said:

"Hope is the stale aftertaste of work unfinished and commitments unmet. The world moves. The world accelerates and it changes. Sometimes the world slows down. In all things, if you wish to change the world you are a fool, but if you desire to be foolish THEN STOP FUCKING HOPING! Make your mark through work and effort and love and friendship - hope is merely the cheapest drug available and it is no alternative to LIFE."

7. Tools

Yorbis, the ancient clown-king sayest:

"Be careful of the man who IS a tool and NOT the person who makes them – he will bend your hopeful gimibels till they burst with blood-ravaged gases.. it's bad.. really.."

8. On "*fancy/schmancy*"

Yorbis, the Elder Clown states:

"A man who makes light of fancy-shmancy doings is most likely at odds with determinant reality.."

9. *Husbands and Wives ...*

77,000 years ago ...

Before the time of Face-book and on-line porn ...

The great clown-lord-king-philosopher-dude Yorbis was out on a 'quiet stroll' in LUBI-PARK (a city park in the ancient metropolis of TRANSCOPIA) when he came across 2 folks yelling at each other.

Person 1, Female: "YA KNOW, I WORK TOO, I MANAGE THE BILLS, I JUST WISH YOU COULD KEEP THE BATHROOM CLEAN..."

Person 2, Male: "YES, I get 'IT'... I am a slob and old and fat and not a millionaire... I've never been good enough for you... I STARTED WEIGHT WATCHERS!"

Yorbis, hiding in the bushes, continued to observe. He found this very entertaining. He was hoping there would be violence.

Person 1, Female: "YAMMER, YAMMER, YAMMER, YAMMER..." -
-> This is how Yorbis heard it ...

Person 2, Male: "BLAH, BLAH, BLAH, BLAH, BLAH...
FUCK..." --> Once again, this is how it was received in the Yorbis hearing-brain-processing-zone ...

Yorbis then jumped out from the bushes, and caught the couple off guard - they were quite startled.

"Gentle city folk... ", Yorbis said with a slight smirk, "What's the dealio?"

"My wife, Cursnodia, is constantly berating me for being fat and messy..." --> the dude said...

"My husband, Limbian, goes to work, grabs beer, hangs out in his office all night and then MAYBE comes to bed ... And then he wakes up and repeats this ... Every single

day ... He is watching porn or something ..."

Yorbis was silent for several seconds, and then as if a wave of inspiration crashed over him, he then spoke ...

"Peoples, Yorbis has been married for 57 years and this is my SECOND marriage. I would like to say that each day is easy, but that is false. I would like to say I was ALWAYS in love with my dear wife Reeniz, but that too would be a lie. It would be great to pretend that my marriage is one long honeymoon, but my honeymoon sucked so I am kind of glad that is not the case. The truth is thus: marriage is not some endless, cheesy, movie love affair. We watch 'romantic' movies, and we see the fragments of joy in 10 minute segments, and we are led to believe that love is like that - a string of romantic vignettes. But love is like the rock or the stone or the mountain - it can last for all time (it seems too) but it is also rough, and hard, and quite dangerous and people die falling off of it."

Yorbis then looked at them both, casting his gaze from one to the next in a rather serious and crazy-man kind of way ...

"Do you both love each other?"

The husband and wife were silent for a moment but then each nodded almost simultaneously.

"Then if you love each other, hug each other, FORGIVE EACH OTHER, and remember that the only valid certification program for a professional diplomat is MARRIAGE. To make it last, you must figure out: a) what you need, b) what you don't need and c) what you are willing to bargain with and if you are lucky, most of your bargaining or compromise come from items in column [b]. If you can find the point, somewhere in the middle, where you are both able to find meaning and hope and self-awareness and ideally a child or

two ... well ... then I think you will be fine ... but I make no promises."

Then, with a stern expression, Yorbis declared the following:

"BUT KNOW THIS: LONELINESS IS HELL, BUT LOVE WITHOUT COMPROMISE OR CARE IS WAY WORSE THAN HELL. IT'S LIKE HELL PART 2, BUT STARRING MATT DAMON. IT SUCKS. TOTALLY SUCKS. LIKE THE MOVIE ELYSIUM."

"LOVE UNBRIDLED BECOMES MASTER OF ALL AND REARS ITS HEAD LIKE A DRAGON. TRUST ME. THAT'S HOW MY FIRST MARRIAGE ENDED AND HOW MY LIFE ALMOST DID - SHE CAME AT ME WITH A SHIV OR A SHANK OR SOMETHING, MAYBE 3 FEET OF CARBON STEEL CHAIN, IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO!"

"Have a nice day!"

And with that Yorbis walked on - and the couple, frozen for a moment, looked into each other's eyes, grabbed the other's hand and walked in the opposite direction from Yorbis.

Yorbis thought to himself: "I give them 2 weeks, tops, before they kill each other."

And, so, Yorbis frequented the park, on the days that followed, hoping he would catch a glimpse of a murder-suicide or something really crazy.

Yorbis was a scientist after all, and a cynical romantic.

10. A Winter's Prayer ...

Many millions of years ago ...

Before the time of "Jersey Shore" and Snookie ...

Before the time of English Queens and British Royalty,
and other such assholes and douche-bags ...

There was once a great-clown-lord-king-philosopher
named Yorbis.

One winter's night, in the ancient city-state of
Kzorica, Yorbis was walking the streets, by himself. The
night air was crisp and the late autumn leaves were frozen
and collecting on the sidewalks.

Kzorica was once a city of joy, a city renowned for
friendship and community and a general sense of humans and
clown-folk at peace.

Kzorica was the centerpiece of clown civilization -
many of its citizens participated and cooperated and felt a
need to make the world a little better (not a little
worse).

Kzorica, these days, was quiet, dark, lonely ...

You see, the people of Kzorica had their "GAMESIMS" and
"TWATTER MESSAGES" and "FACESTERS" and "MUMBLER FEEDS" and
various other cubes and rectangles that would flash with
electric excitement - and suck people into a personal,
separate and rather myopic tiny little world.

Of course, Yorbis loved gadgets -- Yorbis had a
FACESTER account as well. But Yorbis could see, on that
dark winter's night, that there was something wrong -
something was terribly "out of balance". All of this, as
Yorbis was treading those deserted streets, fed his
troubled spirit.

You see, this night that Yorbis was walking about was the night of **Roon-Kantz** - the wondrous celebration of "Winter Hope and Blessings".

Roon-Kantz was an occasion for families to recognize the good of the year and meditate upon their own good fortune and the good they did (or didn't do) for others. It was a holiday dedicated to thanking your neighbors - for simply being good neighbors. A time of parties and outside festivals and dancing and music and chocolate and JOY!

But this night of Roon-Kantz -- Yorbis saw no one dancing.

Yorbis saw no festivities in the streets.

Yorbis saw no neighbors hugging neighbors.

Yorbis walked these vacant streets and could only see the green electric glow emanating from closed windows.

Yorbis peered inside these windows, as he often did (being too curious for his own good), and Yorbis saw families inches away from each other, separated by the smallest space - mothers and fathers and sons and daughters and other folk trapped in their own personal dark worlds.

People trapped in prison cells with invisible walls.

Yorbis knew these people were good - as good as people have ever been.

Yorbis also knew these people were afraid - as afraid as ever, and possibly more afraid than at any time in their history or any history before this time or later (which is saying a lot).

So, when Yorbis walked until he could walk no further, and he reached the center of town, where the great "Fountain of Zambooey" was located - Yorbis knelt there and

began to pray:

"Dear lord of the universe, I am a rather faithless sole of mockery and humor and cheap satire. I realize I deserve nothing and frankly I don't want anything from you - you've done enough already, as far as I am concerned. But, I am not here to complain."

"Dear Lord, who seems to run everything, I ask for only one thing - one simple request. For one night a week, could you use your magic to stop all these devices and cubes and accounts and messages, so that fathers and sons and family and friends and neighbors could see each other again?"

"Can you crash their networks and force their gaze outward? Can you somehow remind these good people that there is, just outside their door, a world? - and that world is not all bad."

"Can you make them see that there are doors and windows, in their homes, and that maybe they should open them? - the windows and the doors ..."

"Moreover, Lord, can you get them off their asses to venture forth and say hello to their neighbors and greet their fellow citizens in this great city of Kzorica, on this wondrous night of Roon-Kantz?"

"I know I am asking for a lot here, dude, Lord. But man, I hardly ever ask you for anything and supposedly you have magical powers - so I ask that you use this magic to stop those little devices for one night a week ... maybe two. Do this, Lord, and maybe these cold city streets can become warm with the glow of families and children and dogs and cats and HOPE!"

"Peace out, Lord-Dude!"

Yorbis finished his prayer and walked on.

Yorbis had no illusions, he knew the world was entering an age of darkness.

Yorbis' heart was heavy that cold evening and yet his heart kept beating and asking for some "hopeful fancy" - some escape hatch for the world's souls.

Here is the thing about wise, old, Yorbis ...

Yorbis would rather be "wrong and happy" than "right and sad", all things being equal. Maybe this is too simplistic for us modern folk to contemplate, but perhaps simplicity is wisdom and hope is the only tonic for our dark nights of the soul.

Crazy ideas.

Whatever ...

Put down your smart phone for just one minute today - maybe 5 minutes.

Disconnect from your email.

Find someone you love and give them a hug.

Maybe even take a stroll outside and greet the world with a smile.

Happy Roon-Kantz!

11. Meaning and Faith

111K Years ago...

A time previous to this - by a fucking long shot.

A time of simpler things, well ... I dunno ... Actually, we humans (and clowns) always see things this way, but that is mostly bullshit as well (a topic for another day).

Bottom line: "best of times, worst of times" clichés are just that - FUCKING CLICHÉS!

Any who ...

Yorbis, the ancient clown-philosopher-wanderer, was strolling about the coastal city of Roort to relieve his boredom.

Roort was a well known destination for many in those times if your interests were seafood, fishing, learning, and prostitution - many great schools and universities were situated in and around Roort.

As Yorbis walked about Roort, looking at all the beautiful women, taking in the sights, eating the "fried fish brains and gruel" that so many there loved (sigh), he came across a young clown priest by the name of Quom.

Quom had been studying at the University and deciding whether to continue on his path to ultimate wisdom or to quit school and rejoin his father's fishing business (believe it or not, those fried fish brains were popular). Yorbis could tell Quom was in despair, so he decided, being the nosy/busybody he was, that he would interrupt this young man's meditation and have a chat.

Yorbis: "Young dude, why are you so focused and apparently distressed?"

Quom: "It's complicated."

Yorbis: "Don't be a dick, Yorbis LOVES complicated - have you NOT heard of 'Old Yorbis'?"

Quom: "Of course, but being that I've never seen you before, and do not know your face from any pictures, you cannot expect me to 'know you' automatically now, can you?"

Yorbis: "Good point ... Continuing ... What is the problem you confront? - that is IF you are willing to talk."

Quom stared at the ground for several seconds, then looked up at Yorbis and began to speak.

Quom: "Sir, I have lost faith. I don't mean faith in the gods or faith in society or even faith in myself - I have no faith in anything. I look about and I see chaos. I see change without purpose. I see violence without remorse. I see justice without wisdom - and thousands of people, going about their daily lives, shuffling by each other in a near-dead stupor. I guess I have no faith that there is 'faith' or 'meaning' or anything. Perhaps the universe is simply a big, fat, collection of nothing? It would be better if I were a fisherman I think, like my dad - working all day, drinking and smoking hemp at night, and just live out my days in the gray realm of the mundane."

Yorbis was stunned ...

A young man, still so new to this world, confronting "*the question*" that all men MUST CONFRONT - usually when they are much older. Of course, Yorbis knew there was truly no simple answer - just more dumb and not so dumb questions.

Yorbis: "Kiddo, I don't disagree, I'm actually quite impressed at your arrival, at this destination, so soon ... but look at it this way: every person, smart or dull, must

confront the FIRST QUESTION: is this reality before me 'real' or TRUE, or am I being deceived in my perception?. Once the first question is confronted, then you are expected to either 'accept reality as REAL' or denounce it as fiction. Truly, solipsism is the starting place and the ending place of almost all metaphysics. So, I really can't tell you what the point is - if you have no 'faith' at all, then you will never be able to answer that FIRST QUESTION for yourself. Bottom line: you must have some kind of 'faith' to do anything in this world - even if all you want to do is deny it - IT being the BIG EVERYTHING that is pretty much EVERYWHERE."

Yorbis continued as the young man's eyes widened.

Yorbis: "Listen dude, it gets a whole lot worse than this ... Even IF you answer the FIRST QUESTION, all that you have gained in the process are more questions - every goddamn question opening to a new one. It is quite maddening and it often makes me curse the gods for giving clowns and men 'reason' and 'logic'. Take that book, over there, by your side... I know that book... It is the "Clown Compendium of Wise Thinkery" and frankly it is mostly crap... well... excepting some pithy commentary from me of course. But that book, that so many 'smart people' have spent time studying, does not have ONE INTERPRETATION. Every layer of interpretation opens into another layer - and that layer reveals more questions. That IS NOT what your professors will tell you - but professors are jerks and losers mostly."

Yorbis paused for a moment, took a breath, and turned his eyes to the horizon -- out towards the sea and beyond, where the masts of sailing ships could be seen creeping across ocean blue...

Yorbis: "Alas ... In all this confusion, it still comes down to 'faith'. I am not a believer in blind faith, I simply denounce the narrow universe of total Scepticism, Cynicism, and the denial of reality for lack of proof that 'reality' is 'real'. Surely, you cannot argue with the man who denies 'everything', but eventually this same man must eat, sleep, live or die - I do not see much happiness in denying EVERYTHING! I know not what happens in death, but I would wager it is not worth the test of 'empty nothingness' and 'morbid solipsism' in this life. Young man, you can choose to be both critical and alive - it is your responsibility to both adopt and to analyze your own 'model' or 'paradigm' of the universe. I cannot promise you undeniable proof that 'your view' is the correct one - that is a reptiles path. What I can promise you is some peace if you are willing to open the door, just a crack, to let in some light - even if you let in some confusion as well."

Yorbis, seeming ready to stop his rant, breathed a sigh and concluded ...

Yorbis: "Any ways, this is what I think and I am often wrong and in this life I expect to be more wrong than right, more often than not. The world is chaos on the surface, and it takes a whole lot of fucking effort to find meaning in this maelstrom of perceptions and thoughts. But, like I said, I keep trying and I suppose you will too. Be a fisherman dude, be a farmer, build things or teach - I really don't give a shit. Just get over yourself and know that you are NOT the first clown (or man) to confront the FIRST QUESTION, nor shall you be the last."

After Yorbis had paused for a minute, in silent meditation, Quom grabbed his book and papers and walked away.

Yorbis never saw Quom again, but he didn't need to 'see him' to know 'he was' - and he (Quom), most likely, 'still is'. Quom 'is', in whatever form 'is' takes - and "if he is a fisherman, then so be it and good!"

Yorbis thought, "That should be meaning enough!"

12. Concerning Disillusionment

A long time ago ...

A really, very, extremely long time ago ...

So far in the past that people didn't really give a shit about "time", per se, and frankly the whole discussion of carving up "stuff" into slices of moments would have really pissed folks off and probably would have led to your hanging, decapitation, or worse ...

Well, don't ask me how long - just accept the fact that it was a fucking long time ago.

In that age, there was this well known wandering philosopher, clown-science theoretician, expert theosophist, and generally "cool dude" named Yorbis and Yorbis was currently attending "a conference" (drinking beer) with some fellow thinkers and such.

One such thinker in the group, Xavier Wzacatitus, was very fidgety - he seemed like he wasn't having a good time at all and perhaps no amount of drinking would cure this.

Yorbis: "Xavier, dude, why are you so nervous?"

Xavier looked up amazed - no one, not even his wife, had noticed. He, Xavier, had been upset for weeks - but others simply ignored him. He was less nervous than anxious, and his anxiety looked like nervousness to others - or maybe like nothing. Xavier was good at bottling shit up, and holding crap in.

Xavier: "Yorbis, I used to believe in Toomar 'The Helpful' and his 'Return to Good Stuff' political party. But ever since the scandal ... You know ... Where Toomar was found taking monies and using them illegally for Gandoorian 'Floop Rides' ... Well, I think since then, since that very moment, I've come to think I am merely a

fool. I feel stupid for believing any of the 'Toomars' of this wretched and dishonest world - they are everywhere ... My world is broken."

Yorbis knew this feeling that Xavier spoke of - Yorbis knew this feeling because Yorbis had felt it, periodically, off and on, his whole fucking life.

When Yorbis was 10 he realized that Quntucz "The Happy Fairy" was merely his parents pretending to be Quntucz.

When Yorbis was 25 he realized that his government, the people that "ran the world", were mostly socio-paths, and scum-bags, and murderers, and whores ...

And yes - Yorbis had, after these periods, and before, a stream of dis-enchantments and "paradigm shifts" and a series of existential crises concerning his own "authenticity" (whatever the fuck Sartre meant by that bullshit).

Yes, yes indeed, Yorbis had very little left he actually believed in - but he did believe in some shit.

Yorbis had principles and fundamental beliefs - ideals and values that have been (mostly) constant, almost since birth, and perhaps since before his birth, but the list was very finite. Much of what Yorbis "understood" about the world was in fact, in Yorbis' own mind, layers of fantasy masquerading as certainty.

It's not that "reality" doesn't exist - that would be stupid. No - it is more like "reality", whatever it might be, is probably incomprehensible in any fundamental sense. We are lucky to receive a very thin substrate of data concerning the nature of the universe and the world that surrounds us - the rest is probably "shadow play", poorly understood experiences, and infinite nothingness.

It's not that the universe is out to deceive us - that would be ridiculous: Nope, the universe has nothing against us and holds no malice. It is our own, limited, finite, and sometimes broken, brains that put into question our assumptions and often undermine our world view - this "undermining" often happens just when we think our fucking "world view" is rock solid! (this is absurdity and it is our plight and we need to accept it)

Yorbis: "Xavier, man, I totally get it. I think I spend almost every waking moment, of every day, trying to undermine values or principles I hold true and important. This is very painful at times, because at times I have to admit something that no thinking person wants to - I have to admit I might be wrong! Sure, you may spend your whole life shuffling from one thing to 'believe in' to the next, but this does not imply the non-existence of eternal truths - it simply demonstrates the lack of 'eternalness' in any of us clowns or humans. Our daily lives confirm the finiteness and shallowness of what we, as simple creatures, understand. I know this doesn't help - but note this: only in death does disillusionment end. Only in death does the essential truth triumph - that truth which says: 'we were born into the fiery cauldron of the universal nursery and that is where we return (very shortly)'. "

Xavier sat silent for a moment and then entered into a rather droll conversation about "flooping" with a buddy of his.

Yorbis, knowing that only for the briefest of moments was Xavier really conscious of what he was saying, pondered how one could stay in that place - that moment of perpetual undermining, when nothing and no one is taken too seriously.

A place where we can be at peace with impermanence, delusions, and other forms of temporary insanity.

A universe that might be perfect, but is seemingly populated by varying kinds of self-aware creatures who can never be perfect - they are condemned to the Sisyphean pursuit of "perfection" and the Pyrrhic victories along the way.

We must always forgive ourselves our whims, opinions, beliefs, axioms, "bad ideas", "Cretan advice" and other truisms and "folk psychologies" which infest our waking minds (fuck Rorty and his condescending bullshit).

We should forgive ourselves and then laugh.

"This is a funny idea", Yorbis thought.

For old Yorbis - humor, self-doubt, and freedom are vitally connected.

13. On Bitter-Solitude

When Yorbis had reached the age of 40, considered middle-aged among the clownish folk, he had become distant, dejected, and bitter.

For so many years others, strangers, friends, folks, would appear and ask poor old Yorbis for guidance. They wanted what so many had and did and continue to want - "easy answers". But, as Yorbis well understood there were no "easy questions" and the answers were always twice removed and many times more difficult to acquire.

One day, during one of Yorbis' "meditative sessions" at a local saloon, a young man - who was very drunk - came up to Yorbis and began to speak.

Yorbis, who was drinking his cheap whiskey, merely stared at his glass - but also tried to listen, even if not attentively.

"Great Yorbis ... you are known far and wide as the PARAMOUNT source of clownish-thinkery and wisdom and thought and ideas and other stuff that people go to school for many years, and acquire great debt in student-loans, to understand ... but you see ... YOU SEE! ... this is the true temple! This tramp bar! This dimly lit home of forsaken souls! This smelly, moldy, damp, realm is the true 'temple of knowledge' ... you know man ... ya KNOW? You need to tell me man ... please ...", the man continued like this, for several minutes - angry, sad, miserable, hopeless, neurotic, drunk and LOUD. At first Yorbis hoped the man would simply walk away and leave him alone ... in Yorbis' own misery ... but this was not to be.

Yorbis didn't come to this bar to "provide advice", he came to ruminate (in a maudlin fashion) upon his recent divorce and to consider the possibility that he would never

find love again, and to accept the notion that he might spend the remainder of his life as a pathetic, friendless, bachelor - or some kind of negative shit like that ...

Yorbis interrupted the drunk, and began to talk his own rant - slurred-speech and all ...

"Sir, you don't know me ... you simply have some meager image of me ... probably gleaned from other's ... or the journals of thinkery ... or the stories or nonsense that people spread about, thinking they know something about someone else ... but you don't know me ... yet you feel comfortable complaining to me - so I suggest you shut the fuck up and accept that the world has abandoned you ... you are alone ... horribly, distinctly, despondently ALONE! No one cares about your drunken speech, least of all me. There are so many drunks in this bar, so many with stories of woe ... yours isn't even the most interesting ... you see that woman over there?", Yorbis motioned towards the corner of the bar where a young woman, of 30, was sitting alone, nearly passed out and buckled over at her table.

"That woman, over there, her child died quite recently and her husband left her after the death for another woman ... her story is of deep pain and regret and some day, I hope, she walks out of this hole of inebriated despair - but for now she is content to dull her senses and ponder how truly absurd and painful this life can be."

"You are simply that irritation that disturbs this silence - you are that parasite that feeds on another's sadness. But what we want, more than all else, is to be left alone in silence. We will drink our fill, and possibly come back tomorrow and drink more, and when the drinking and the crying and the morbid obsession is complete - some of us will heal and move on, others of us will simply find

another level of loneliness and pain, and then hope that healing comes, as it should, when it can."

"Young lad, I am drunk, and curmudgeonly, and probably belligerent ... but I am asking something for myself and for you - sit, be quiet, with your drink. Pretend for a moment that there is a reason people drink at 2:00 PM on a Tuesday afternoon, and that you understand ... respect their loneliness and respect your own need for solitude ... too often we are told 'be happy, be joyous' but that is not all of our nature just a piece ... accept that in loneliness and sullen unity you can inspect your thoughts and find a way out of whatever personal hell you are trapped in. Meditate on this my man! Embrace that lonely path of nothing and then be hopeful that there is a way out."

Yorbis finished his whiskey, pulled away from the bar, left the stunned drunk to his self, and walked out into the street. The sun was low in the sky because this was Autumn in northern climes. Yorbis wandered down the road, kicking rocks as he went, pondering his rudeness towards that strange drunk and also accepting that it could not have been different.

Yorbis knew his isolation was unhealthy, he also knew that "health" was complicated and the mind needed the time to heal when some trauma occurs. Sometimes this healing is fast, sometimes slow, and one should do their best not to dwell in self-pity. But to deny the necessity of this loneliness was also to deny our choices and the consequences of these same.

"I am alone, solitary, and free ..."

Yorbis would likely drink more tomorrow - or not ... only Yorbis knew.