

THE AIRBAG OF YOUR RESILIENCE

by

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8/19/2013

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Characters

BOB, male, 20s, a self-made guru.
WINSTON, male, 20s, a seeker of truth.
PATTY, female, 20s, a seeker of Bob.

Time

Present.

Setting

A mountaintop.

THE AIRBAG OF YOUR RESILIENCE

BOB, bearded and dressed in a white floor-length robe, sits cross-legged and barefoot on a mountaintop. He breathes slowly and deeply--the epitome of serenity and contentment. He has no reaction as, after a few seconds, we hear heavy breathing approach.

WINSTON (O.S.)

Hallo? Hal-lo-o.

More breathing, then the sounds of rockfall and snapping branches.

WINSTON (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Shit!

PATTY (O.S.)

Winston! Are you all right?

WINSTON (O.S.)

Shit, shit, shit.

PATTY (O.S.)

What it is? Bob, answer me!

More breakage, then...

WINSTON (O.S.)

Yeah, yeah.

PATTY (O.S.)

What happened? Where are you?

WINSTON (O.S.)

Down here.

PATTY (O.S.)

My God, Winston, what happened?

WINSTON (O.S.)

Fucking rotten branch. Broke off and I fell.

PATTY (O.S.)

I see you. Are you OK?

WINSTON groans, a long drawn-out wail of pain.

PATTY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Winston, what is it? Your leg? Your back? Oh, no, not your head.

WINSTON (O.S.)

Worse.

PATTY (O.S.)

Worse? What could be worse?

WINSTON (O.S.)

My Hawke's Bay jacket. Six-hundred-fill, power premium European white goose down insulation--it's...shredded. Ruined...

PATTY (O.S.)

Jesus Christ, Winston, I thought you were dying.

WINSTON (O.S.)

Might as well be. I just shit-canned five-hundred dollars' worth of high-performance gear.

PATTY (O.S.)

God, you're lucky you're alive. Here, let's get you cleaned up. Few more steps, we're at the summit.

The sound of labored movement through brush signals PATTY's and WINSTON's arrival. WINSTON is bleeding from several places and his expensive clothes are filthy rags. At first, as PATTY leads WINSTON to a large rock and tends to his injuries, they don't notice BOB, who remains impassive.

PATTY (CONT'D)

Here, sit. I got a first aid kit.

As PATTY works, WINSTON winces and moans...

PATTY (CONT'D)

You're lucky. Cuts. Abrasions. All superficial, from what I can see.

WINSTON

I'd like to know who's responsible for that trail. We get back to the ranger station, I'm going to give them a piece of my mind. It's a death trap.

BOB

(Eyes still closed.)

The Way to Enlightenment is not rated according to the National Climbing Classification System.

PATTY and WINSTON react. BOB opens his eyes and gazes at them serenely.

BOB (CONT'D)

Yet you would do well to wear boots with adequate ankle support and steel shanks.

PATTY

Who are you?

BOB

A teacher. A student. A cardmember since 1997.

WINSTON gets to his feet.

WINSTON

What are you doing up here?

BOB

Waiting for you.

WINSTON

That's crazy. We don't know you.

BOB

Do you know pain? Do you know disappointment? Do you suffer from acid reflux?

PATTY

You're...not making sense.

BOB

Sense is an illusion. Acceptance of its absence is the implied contract in all software user agreements.

PATTY

Look, my friend has been injured. Can you help?

BOB

Your friend...Winston, isn't it?...would do well to question the reality of the cosmogonic will-o-the-wisp commonly known as loss.

PATTY and WINSTON are stunned.

WINSTON

How?...how do you know my name?

BOB

I have an app that alerts me to all Facebook and Twitter mentions of climbing this mountain.

(To PATTY.)

You must be Patty. Or are you Melissa?

PATTY

(To WINSTON.)

Who's Melissa?

WINSTON

(Defensively.)

Just...someone at work. A colleague.

PATTY

She's the one with the cleavage, isn't she?

WINSTON

Cleavage? I don't know. I never noticed.

BOB

To cleave means both to separate and to cling--opposites that attract buddies of the bosomy kind.

WINSTON

(To BOB.)

You're not helping.

PATTY

You told me you weren't seeing her any more.

WINSTON

I can't help it. She's in the office every day. But I have nothing to do with her, I swear.

BOB

Vehement denial versus the limited bandwidth of plausibility leads to communication constipation.

WINSTON

What?!

PATTY

You liar. You cheat. You promise-breaker. What were you planning with Melissa?

WINSTON

Nothing! We were just talking. I must've said something about a hike.

PATTY

You're going to see her--when we get back--aren't you?

WINSTON

No-o...

PATTY angrily turns her back on WINSTON.

BOB

I sense a buffering delay in streaming believability.

WINSTON

You stay out of this!

(To PATTY.)

Patty. Baby. I got nothing going on with anyone else.

BOB

Without the twist-off caps of forgiveness, the six-pack of reconciliation quenches no one.

WINSTON

Shut up! Jesus!

PATTY

I should never have come up here with you.

WINSTON

Baby, I almost died for you back there.

WINSTON attempts to hug her, but she shakes him off.

PATTY

Don't touch me!

WINSTON retreats to his rock.

BOB

(To PATTY.)

Rejection has impacted your psychic equilibrium. Let me replenish the nitrogen gas in the airbag of your resilience.

For the first time, PATTY looks at BOB closely.

PATTY

You look familiar. Do I know you?

BOB

Starbucks on 4th and Clifford. I'm the "Cinnamon Roll Frappuccino" guy.

PATTY

(Recognition dawns.)

Oh, yeah. The secret speciality drink. I'm hooked now.

BOB

Only when we harness the higher powers to combine dehydrated espresso, reconstituted powdered skim milk, and a shitload of high fructose corn syrup can we truly achieve the delicious oneness of caffeine toxicity.

PATTY

So tasty. Thanks for enlightening me. Whoever you are.

BOB gets to his feet, dropping his robe to reveal ordinary street clothes.

BOB

I am a child of the nameless and the ineffable. You can call me Bob.

PATTY

Hi, Bob. You've certainly helped me see the light.

BOB

Perhaps you also would also like to see the manifestation of the Tao that is better known as the egg-white omelet at Marco's on the Pier.

PATTY looks at WINSTON dismissively, then smiles at BOB.

PATTY

Why not? Sounds like I'd enjoy that.

PATTY exits on BOB's arm, as...

PATTY (CONT'D)

On the way, tell me about the duality of existence.

BOB

Think of it as the exquisite balance of counterforces--for example, the yang of free-range organic husbandry and the yin of molecular gastronomy.

WINSTON watches them go. Then he pulls out his cell and punches in a number written on a note from his pocket...

WINSTON

...Melissa! Hey! It's Winston. Just calling to see what's up.

(Beat.)

Nah. Just today I broke up with her. Way too materialistic.

(Beat.)

Say, you still up for a day hike?

(Beat.)

How about we climb Fordham peak? The trail is a little overgrown, but I'll clear the path for you.

(Beat.)

You will? Great. Meet you at the ranger station in an hour.

WINSTON disconnects. He's about to leave when BOB's robe catches his eye. He picks it up. He puts it on. He likes the fit. He exits whistling. Fade to black.

THE END