

Bob

T'was a fine spring day, bright, fresh, the sort of day that called for a walk. Or, so Bob surmised, after polishing off his morning coffee. And so it was. His neighbor, Albert, was hard at work tending to his petunias. The little old woman across the lane, the one with the name he could never pronounce, was hobbling down her walk, and greeted him with her usual snaggle-toothed grin. Even the birds whistled merrily as he strode beneath their trees, hands firmly planted in his waistcoat pockets, pipe between his teeth, puffing along without a care in the world.

And that, my dear friends, should have been the way it went, just as it did every Sunday. For Bob was not a church going man. No, Bob was a man of practicality. The sun rose as a result of the rotation of the Earth, the stars twinkled due to atmospheric interference, and while he had no idea how it all came to be, those wise, learned men at university had the mystery well in hand. Math and science and all that. All things followed the principles of physics, and so all things were eminently predictable... if one possessed the proper information. And so, Bob carried on, puffing away, walking his usual route, at his usual time. Not a care in the world. He rounded the corner by the bakery, waved at the little red-haired girl eating her jelly donut, and set off down the lane toward the park, to settle under his usual tree and watch the ducks.

And that's when it happened. He'd just passed the old oak with the angry squirrel, laughed at the old fellow's chittering, when a glass bottle fell from the heavens with such gusto it implanted its neck almost entirely into the verge.

Bob stopped, somewhat stymied, I dare say. He glanced up, but aside from a few clouds, saw nothing but blue sky. Then, somewhat shaken, wrenched the bottle free of the lawn and noticed a small bit of paper tucked inside.

Well, Bob did what any man in his position would have done, he uncorked the bottle, tipped out the paper, and gave it a read.

“Thanks, but we have enough fish.”

Bob’s brow creased. “What the devil?” He snorted with a laugh, but then something happened he could not explain. A single fish, a Cod, I believe he said it was, slammed into the ground at his feet, thrashing and jumping the way fish do.

Poor Bob barely had time to gather his thoughts, when a sardine struck him right on the bean. And, before ole Bob could puff his pipe, there he stood, in a downpour of fish of every kind. Perch, marlin, sea bass thicker than drops of rain in a spring shower.

Somehow, Bob made it to the oak, and it’s a good thing too. A sardine won’t split your melon, but a great Blue Tuna? Well... That’s a fish of a different color, isn’t it?

The end result of the whole affair was quite remarkable. The price of sushi took a sudden, drastic, but temporary hit. And as for Ole Bob, he’s as practical as ever, I suppose. He no longer misses mass, though he has since become a strong opponent to the tradition of eating fish on Friday. Sacrificing them to the Lord as he calls it.

“Heaven,” he says, “Has enough fish.”