

STUCK

Written by

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EXT. PARK - DAY

A pleasant green island hidden away in some concrete jungle.

Some pigeons. A MOTHER pushing a stroller. An OLD MAN sitting on a bench.

It's a peaceful escape until

BEN COMES CYCLING PAST

Unfortunately Ben is looking at his phone rather than the path ahead and

HIS FRONT WHEEL HITS A TREE STUMP AND

Immediately buckles

FLINGING BEN OVER THE HANDLEBARS

Causing him to land with a, *SPLUTTTTTTTTTT...*

His bicycle lands next to him... *WUMPPPP...*

Ben GROANS... but not from the crash, it's more like the noise you make when you wake up to find that it's Monday morning and you're already supposed to be at work.

He lays on the grass looking at the sky.

The Old Man on the bench glances down at him. We'll call him STAN.

STAN

Lucky you were wearing a helmet.

Ben GROANS again like some sort of hungover Yeti.

BEN

Be better off if I wasn't wearing one.

STAN

Oh, dear.

(sour)

You sound like you're full of sunshine.

Ben wants to laugh but there just isn't any gas left in the tank.

Stan puts his eyes back on the pigeons but Ben makes no effort to get up.

STAN (CONT'D)  
Just gonna stay there, are you?

BEN  
Yep.

STAN  
What if it rains?

BEN  
We'll get wet.

STAN  
I've got an umbrella.

He doesn't, but Ben doesn't even try to look.

Stan slips a hand into his pocket and takes the last of a few biscuits out. Starts eating one.

STAN (CONT'D)  
What's going on then? Who crapped  
in your pants today?

BEN  
Oh, God. Is this the bit where you  
tell me about your renal failure  
just to cheer me up and to remind  
me how lucky I am?

STAN  
Are you always this polite?

BEN  
Only on special occasions...

Stan unwraps another biscuit.

STAN  
I'd offer you a biccy but I don't  
want to waste it.

Stan breaks up one of the biscuits and throws it to the pigeons. Eventually puts the packet into his pocket and then takes his walking stick and pushes to his feet.

STAN (CONT'D)  
Oh, well. I'm off. Gotta get home  
to treat my renal failure.  
(beat)  
It's been nice, but do me a favor.  
I sit here every day... and I look  
forward to it.

(MORE)

STAN (CONT'D)

You messed up the view this afternoon, so next time you're thinking of going arse over tit, do it somewhere else. It's hard to enjoy the place when I've got a sack of cold ham laying next to me. Cheerio...

Stan turns to amble away but

BEN SUDDENLY SITS UP

BEN

S-- sorry...

Stan pivots back to him.

BEN (CONT'D)

S--sorry I-- ruined your t-- time.

STAN

Oh, progress. You're sitting up. I'll call the media.

BEN UNCLIPS HIS HEAD STRAP AND DUMPS HIS HELMET ONTO THE GRASS

BEN

Why do you sit there every day then?

STAN

Oh, it's asking questions too, I'm not sure my prostate can stand the excitement.

BEN

You better sit down again then.

Stan obliges... but he wants the reward and faces Ben for the gold...

Ben sighs--

BEN (CONT'D)

--I've been... a bicycle messenger for years, but I was only supposed to be doing it for a few months. Yesterday I--

STAN FIDDLES WITH HIS EAR

And suddenly

EVERYTHING GOES QUIET

Stan focuses on Ben, who is diligently chatting, but while Ben's lips are moving, no sound is coming out of his mouth.

Stan watches. Ben talks in silence.

Eventually Ben appears to be asking for an answer.

He asks again, his face awash with puzzlement...

STAN FIDDLES WITH HIS EAR AND SOUND INSTANTLY RETURNS

BEN (CONT'D)

What do you think about it?

STAN

What?

BEN

How would you deal with that?

STAN

With, what?

BEN

Were you listening to anything I just said.

STAN

No, I switched my hearing aid off.

There are no words from Ben.

There are simply no words any human being could respond with.

STAN (CONT'D)

I know what you said. You hate your job, your boyfriend just left you, you're in debt, rent, bills, your parrot died and now you've busted your bicycle.

(beat)

You're stuck. Welcome to life. Everyone's stuck. It's called 'living'.

He takes an old napkin out of his pocket.

STAN (CONT'D)

Here's a tissue, use that for your tears.

Ben twists back to the park in an effort to salvage the last of his dignity...

STAN (CONT'D)

I spent twenty years in prison,  
trust me, I know about being stuck  
and I've heard my fair share of bed  
time stories, so as you can  
imagine, I don't want to come down  
here, to my favorite spot, only to  
have to listen to a load more.

Ben looks back to him with something on the tip of his tongue  
but Stan hasn't finish--

STAN (CONT'D)

--You'd think a bit of greenery  
would do people good, but as soon  
as someone slaps a bench down  
between two trees, the floodgates  
seem to open to every gloomy goose  
with a soap opera to moan about.

BEN

Well... I crashed here... to be  
fair.

(beat)

Why were you in prison?

STAN

Accountancy fraud.

BEN

Twenty years... for acc--

STAN

--It was a big fraud. Bank fraud.

BEN

Bank fra--

STAN

--A... a few... banks...

Ben grins... for the very first time.

BEN

You were a bank robber?

STAN

I made some withdrawals.

BEN  
I've never met a bank robber  
before.

STAN  
You're welcome. I hope you're  
feeling better, you certainly  
cheered me up before your tear  
jerker.

Ben is unsure of his meaning...

BEN  
How... how did I-- cheer you--

STAN  
--When you fell off the bike...  
I... laughed, a little bit-- a bit.

Ben snickers. Then--

--Finally pushes to his feet and sits down on the bench next  
to Stan.

BEN  
Did you wear fake glasses and a big  
nose?

Stan goes to answer, but--

BEN (CONT'D)  
--Wait, you... probably didn't need  
to buy the big nose, right?

STAN  
Oh, you made a joke. Now we are  
moving forward, aren't we?

Ben takes in the surroundings for a moment, then--

BEN  
--Maybe I'll have one of your  
moldy, old-man-biscuits now, if you  
don't mind wasting one...

Stan dips a hand into his pocket and takes the wrapper out.

He picks one loose, but it's the last one.

STAN  
Oh. I've only got one left.

Ben waits for half of it, but--

STAN STUFFS THE WHOLE THING INTO HIS MOUTH

Ben grins from ear to ear as Stan's chompers grind it up.

There is no denying it, the old crab certainly has a funny effect on people.

Stan swallows and smiles at Ben who seems to be glowing now.

Stan winks at him.

STAN (CONT'D)

I can tell you're impressed by my former career, but it wasn't all fur cars and fast coats.

BEN

I think you got that the wrong way--

STAN

--My wife died... while I was in prison, so that... hurt...

BEN

Sorry.

Stan shrugs.

BEN (CONT'D)

Do you regret it?

STAN

Well... I didn't regret the drugs and strippers... but, you know-- sitting on the toilet in front of five bunk-mates was a pain.

Both men stare into the park, both with reflecting minds...

STAN (CONT'D)

Who knows. If I hadn't have got caught, I might have been dead by now...

Stan faces Ben with a special focus--

STAN (CONT'D)

--Sometimes the worst case scenario can often work out being the best.

His words land on Ben quite hard, but before Ben can add to it--

AN ELDERLY LADY CALLED ELAINE WALKS UP BEHIND STAN

ELAINE  
Ready love?

Stan swivels around to her.

STAN  
Oh. You're early.

ELAINE  
Yes, I was the only one there.

STAN  
Oh, right...

Stan faces Ben...

STAN (CONT'D)  
Sorry. My wife. I have to hit the  
frog and toad now.

BEN  
What...?  
(beat)  
Wait, what happened to her dying w--

STAN  
--I meant-- her soul died. But  
when we were reunited, she came  
back to life.

BEN GUFFAWS

Seems extreme, but Stan gets to his feet and grabs his  
walking stick. A last look at Ben...

STAN (CONT'D)  
Just remember. Despite everything,  
if you're not in prison... then  
you're doing something right.

And with that, Stan turns away and walks off arm in arm with  
Elaine.

Ben watches... then pivots back to his broken bicycle.

HE NODS TO HIMSELF

Then gets off the bench and lifts his bike up. He seems a  
little lighter on his feet now, as if a magical weight has  
lifted.

Starts walking his bicycle away and heads out of the park.

## ANOTHER ANGLE

At the opposite end of the park, Stan and Elaine are walking towards another exit.

ELAINE

And who were you today dear?

STAN

I was a bank robber.

ELAINE

Oh, fun. Yesterday a Navy Captain, today a bank robber. I wonder what tomorrow will bring.

STAN

So many professions... so little time.

ELAINE

Did it help then?

STAN

I think I made a difference.

Elaine squeezes his arm a little bit tighter.

ELAINE

That's my Stan.

They both beam as they head out of the park with another good deed under Stan's belt.

THE END