

A Story About Little Al

Once upon a time, not too long ago-oh I neglected to mention that all good stories begin this way, with “Once upon a time.” Now you might ask, “Well, what makes this story so good?” Well, I’m really not sure, that’s up to you to decide if it’s good or not. And it’s also your choice to decide if any part of this story speaks to you. And if it speaks to you, where and how does it fit into your story.

So, let’s get on with the story. Once upon a time, not too long ago, but longer than you or I have been around, Little Al came into this world. Face first he came, @ least I think it was face first. I haven’t heard anything different. He came in through the same door we all come in through. You do know there are two doors? One in, and one out.

Now Butch as he came to be called was 8th out of 9. Pee Wee was 9th, but this is not Pee Wee’s story. It was not long before he said to himself, “Hmmm, 8th. Pretty big tribe. Not seen much in that position, and dad’s sleeping another one off. Can’t wait to grow up, get out and be seen.” Now the last time he was seen by dear old dad was around 1938. That was the year dear old dad went down for the Big Sleep.

Well sooner or later, but not soon enough for Butch, he was on his way out of the tribe, off on his own. “Hmmm, kinda bored,” he said. “Still not being seen yet, think I’ll get me a wife, and start my own tribe.” And so it was that this is how it went. And sooner or later, but this time too soon for him, the tribe began to appear. He thought to himself, and maybe even out loud, “Uh oh, this is quite a conundrum.” Although I doubt that he used the word conundrum.

He’s thinking again, “Hmmm, I’ll never be seen now that I started this tribe, so I’d better do somethin’ quick. I know, I’ll join my Uncle Sam’s Navy, sail the high seas, kind of like a pirate only with showers and somewhat better food. That’s my way out. I can check in every once in a Blue Moon, add another kid to the tribe and have another beer. In a cheap motel room maybe.”

It went this way until his Uncle Sam said, “Butch, it’s time for you to leave this tribe.” And he did, but he couldn’t go back to the tribe of 7 he started some years back because they couldn’t remember who he was. Being somewhat creative, he decides to join another tribe where he knows he will be seen. Everyone there is happy with Al because he is such a likeable guy, and the beer is cheap.

This went on for many years and many wives until one day Al is in another pickle. She’s an old one, in bad shape, and so is he. A thin-walled tin can with a shower in a tin can village, waiting it out, hoping his time would soon come, but uh oh, he’s facing the wrong direction. Being at the end of his rope so to speak, his time came. He left backwards with his eyes closed, soul numb from exhaustion.

Now, I’m not sure we choose coming in, but I believe we choose how we leave, forwards or backwards. I think I want to be facing in the opposite direction that Little Al was facing, as ready as I can be when that sort of time comes and that sort of thing happens, hope I’m not blinking and miss something important.

And so, this is how it needs to end, this story about Little Al. “A sad truth, but a true one”, as someone once said to me. See you Al.