

Dario Jung and the GPS from Hell

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Dario Jung and the GPS from Hell

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Dario Jung and the GPS from Hell

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Dario Jung walked into the Anderson Brothers' Paranormal Research Center, better known throughout the neighborhood as their mom's garage, with a bicycle, a Mapsco, and a wild-eyed look about him. "Mother *fuckers!*" he said. "I have some wild-ass shit you've *got* to hear!"

The brothers' cameraman, Artemis Plimp, gave the long-haired young man a smirking once-over. "Busy here, Jung. Find someone else to bother with your paranoid delusions."

“Fuck you, Pinwheel!” Dario said, barely glancing in the other man’s direction. “You’ll be out of here before I am. These bitches’ cameramen *always* quit.”

“Don’t call me Pinwheel!” Artemis whined. “Why do you even call me that?”

“ ’Cause you’re a little bitch who spins around in the wind, *Pinwheel*. That’s why,” Dario answered.

“Actually, Dario,” came the voice of the older Anderson brother, Luke, “we’re editing the footage from that burned down hotel in Cali. Kinda busy right now.”

Dario turned his momentarily full attention on Luke. “You went to fucking Cali, when we’ve got shit-gone-fucked right here in Nightfire?”

“Yeah,” said the younger Anderson, fourteen-year-old Jasper. “Someone gave us a lead. Said there was a phantom hotel that showed up every Christmas Eve with its very own story-telling ghost called Andy Tombs.”

“So, naturally,” added Luke, “we went in the summer, because, for one, it’s fucking California, and for another, I was between semesters at the community college, and I thought it might be fun to get some readings of the area when it’s less active, for later comparison. Looks promising.”

“Plus,” Jasper said, “we get lots of things from Nightfire anyway. After this, we’re editing all that footage from the Alexas Mansion. We got some great infrared—”

“You crazy mother fuckers broke into the *mayor’s* mansion?”

“He let us in,” Artemis answered tersely, having no patience for Dario or his questions.

“Well,” Luke said, “yeah, Pinwheel. But only *after* we broke in. He was nice. He took us around the place and told us where all the hot spots were, then he made some tea, and we traded ghost stories. His wife was totally cool with it too. And we got some amazing shit. I’m glad I voted for him.” He shrugged with a grin. “Even if it was only in the mock election at Nightfire High.”

“I think I have something better than all of your fucking little orb shots and tea parties with the mayor combined!” Dario insisted.

“We actually got a full-bodied apparition on the infrared,” Jasper argued, smugly.

“Wait ...” Artemis said, going pale, “We ... *what?*”

“Yeah, Pinwheel,” Jasper reiterated. “Full-bodied apparition. Not an orb. We’re talking head, arms, legs—”

“Get the fuck out—”

“Mother *fucker!* I’m trying to tell you I can top that!” Dario held up the thick, spiral-bound book in his hand. “Do you know what this is?”

“It looks like a Mapsco,” observed Artemis, condescendingly. “Who the fuck rides around on a bike with a Mapsco?”

“I do, ya fuckin’ Pinwheel!”

“Where’s your car?” Luke asked, still absorbed in his video editing.

“I no longer have a car, Brothers Anderson. It has been fucked!”

“Fucked?” Artemis scoffed.

“Yes,” said Dario. “Fucked harder than Pinwheel gets at his uncle’s house over spring break.”

“God damn it! Stop calling me Pinwheel!”

“And you think the circumstances of this car-fucking would be of interest to us?” Luke asked, ignoring the videographer.

“Right,” Dario agreed, nodding his head with certainty, “because the thing by which my wheels were fucked was a deranged entity right out of Hell!”

Luke turned around in his chair, facing Dario at last. “I’m listening.” He noted the book. “And why *are* you carrying a Mapsco? Where did you even *find* that thing?”

“What’s a Mapsco?” Jasper asked.

“It’s like a GPS for old people, Jazz,” his older brother answered.

“Oh.” Jasper nodded. “I get it.” But he didn’t. It was honestly beyond him how a book could give anyone directions while they were driving.

“Yeah,” Dario said, agitatedly, “but *this* kind of GPS doesn’t try to fucking kill you!”

“All right. You’ve got us curious,” Luke said. “Let’s have it. What happened?”

“You’re not *seriously*—”

“Shut up, Pinwheel,” Luke said sharply. “Go ahead, Dario. So ... your GPS tried to kill you ...” He waited for Dario to pick up the strand.

“Yes, it did, my friends! That mother fucking robot tried to do me in, as it had so many others in its path! Well, probably. At least it killed my Aunt Snowy!”

“Barbie Snow died in a car crash,” Artemis corrected.

“Uh, yeah!” Dario said. “Duh!”

“Pinwheel,” Luke said warningly.

“Fucking hell! My name *isn’t* Pinwheel!”

Jasper shrugged, his arms folded across his chest. “Well, that’s what Luke had me put on the credits of the YouTube vids.”

“He *what*? Luke!”

Luke put a finger to his mouth and glared at Pinwheel. “Shh.” He held out a hand towards their guest. “Dario, proceed.”

“And so I shall!” Dario pronounced. “Well, where shall I begin? It was the best of times, it was the worst of times—”

“Dickens.” Luke said flatly.

“Yeah, Dickens! That bitch *knows* how to tell a tale! I’ve read *The Old Curiosity Shop* nine times, and I still sob like a *bitch* when Little Nell—!”

“Right,” Luke said, cutting off the otherwise inevitable tangent. “Now come back. You had an encounter with a homicidal GPS?”

“Right, right! So here we go! It happened like this:

“So, as you gentlemen all well know, my dearly beloved Aunt Snowy died three months ago in an insane way, driving right off of an overpass in Dallas. Now, why the fuck would a sane woman do such a thing? I’ll tell you, gentlemen, I learned the hard way why! It’s because she believed in her technology! We’re talking blind faith! And here’s how I know.

“Aunt Snowy was the very relation who introduced me to reading and helped me to become the right cultured mother fucker who stands before you today. She read to me when I was a kid, bought me books, took me to poetry readings and shit. She was the best aunt ever! But she loved sci-fi a little too much. Got way too excited about technological innovations. Like her fucking GPS. She just never thought about directions again once she plugged that bitch in.

“So, as it turns out, having no children of her own, she left all of her worldly treasures to her sister’s kid: me. And those treasures consisted of a Kindle Paperwhite, loaded to capacity with fine literary badassery, her Playstation 4, some sort of

fucking laser pen thing, and the very Hell-spawned GPS of which I've come to profess!

“To tell you the truth, I was so overwhelmed with fuckin’ grief over Aunt Snowy’s odd demise, that I left all that shit in boxes for months. Then the spring semester ended at NCC, and my mind was left idle. Not wanting to snort coke like Sherlock Holmes, I decided to break open the boxes and find that Kindle, and thus I immersed myself in the aforementioned literary badassery, until one day my mom was all, ‘Dario, you lazy bitch-ass, go to the store and get me some fuckin’ beers! And pick up some cigarettes, so I can die from throat cancer and shit! And get me some butter! And go to your grandmother’s storage unit and bring me back her unicycle, so that I can put it by the couch and make it look like I don’t just fuckin’ sit around and drink and smoke and stew in my own farts all day!’

“And I was all, ‘I don’t know how the fuck to get to grandma’s storage unit!’

“So, Mom was all, ‘Why don’t you get that fucking GPS out of all the shit my sister left you, and not me (because you’re awesome, and I suck goat ass nightly), and put it in the fuckin’ car I only bought you to do tasks for me in?’

“So, I was like, ‘Shit! Fine! Fuck!’ and I unpacked the GPS and plugged it into my car. Mom handed me the address on a little scrap of paper and said, ‘Hurry the fuck up, ass hole.’ Then

she went back inside to suck the tobacco out from underneath her fingernails until I brought her back some proper death sticks.

“So, I started driving down the fuckin’ road, and I decided to test that shit. I plugged the address into the GPS, and it had this smooth, manly voice and shit and was all like, ‘Turn left,’ so I fuckin’ did.

“Things went well at first, and we got to the smelly old storage unit. I got out the unicycle, tried to ride it, fell on my mother fuckin’ face, got up, threw that shit in the trunk, and got in the car. And that was my first indication that something otherworldly was afoot, as I could swear I heard that smooth-ass GPS voice suppressing a chuckle at my unicycle-related misfortunes. But I thought, nah, no way that was happening, and we went on. I hit the ‘Home’ icon on the GPS’s flat, map-lookin’ face, started blasting Enya on my iPod, and headed home; or so I thought.

“We got a little ways down the road, when I clearly heard the GPS say, ‘Turn right, and fuck Enya.’

“And I was like, ‘Say, *what?*’

“And the GPS was like, ‘Left turn ahead.’

“And I was all, ‘That’s what I thought! Ain’t nobody compares with Enya!’ So I turned that shit up and started singing along. Then I turned right. Then I turned left. All was as it should be, until I realized, a few turns later, that I had no earthly idea where the fuck I was.

“Suddenly, I found myself on a dark, deserted road, and little shanty houses and goats were everywhere. A fuckin’ rooster jumped up on my hood and took an angry shit on my windshield. And then I heard the GPS fuckin’ laughing.

“And I was like, ‘Oh, shit! Mom was right! Books have finally rotted my brain! What the fuck! This isn’t home, you crazy robot bitch!’

“So, once more, quoth the GPS, ‘Fuck Enya! Turn that shit off right now, you wuss-ass mother fucker, or I swear to shit I’ll fucking kill you!’

“This time I *knew* I hadn’t imagined it. So, I was like, ‘Fine. Fuck. I’ll turn it down.’ So I turned it down, totally delivering on my generous pledge to do so. But that wasn’t good enough, ’cause this GPS was a complete and utter bitch.

“The GPS fuckin’ was all, ‘I said turn it off!’

“And I was like, ‘Bitch! This is my car! I wanna listen to fuckin’ Enya! You just get me the fuck back home, so I can drop off this ridiculous-ass unicycle and go to the store for my terrible-as-shit parent!’

“And the GPS spake, ‘Turn it off!!!’ then just started growling and shit like fuckin’ *The Exorcist* and the like.

“So, I said, ‘Well fuck!’

“And the GPS suddenly got quiet, and only Enya could be heard throughout the now peaceful vehicle, as we drove on. I watched the map on the screen with newborn trepidation,

wondering at the trustworthiness of this moody mechanical navigator. It was then that he said, 'Bear left,' and I thought *frog right*, 'cause *The Muppet Movie* was the shit. Then I did bear left, as requested, thinking our little disagreement settled and behind us, with myself having been established as the alpha between the two of us.

"I found myself driving up a mighty overpass, and when we got to the very highest point of it, that bitch said, in the calmest ass hole voice, 'Turn right.'

"I found myself doing as requested, when I suddenly remembered where I was, and that there was no road to the right, but only open mother fuckin' air and a fatal drop below. I regained my senses, and I steadied the wheel, riding the overpass to its intended conclusion. Then I said, somewhat timidly, as I had no idea where in the untold fuck I was, 'I think, maybe, I'll just go ahead and turn off the iPod, man. But only because I fuckin' feel like it.'

"The GPS made no further attempts on my life that night, as it guided me back home. Upon parking in the driveway, I turned off the car, pissed as hell, and got out to go to the trunk and get the one-wheeled oddity that my mother had requested I retrieve. As I rolled it past the driver's side window, I heard the GPS' smooth-ass voice say, 'I'm still going to kill you, Dario Jung.'

“I reached in, and I unplugged that bitch right then and there. ‘The fuck you will,’ said I victoriously, and I deposited the unicycle in the living room and fuckin’ *walked* to the store for Mom’s beers, butter, and cigarettes, amidst a cacophony of screams and curses ejaculating forth from her bitter-ass face for my having not done so already.

“ ’Twas early the following morn’ when at last I convinced myself that I had only imagined that my new GPS was, in fact, a rude-ass, homicidal, music-hating mofo. I decided to plug it in and give it another try. Perhaps, I thought most erroneously, I had dreamt it, out of frustration over my Godzilla-esque parent’s most toxic thanklessness. For surely no such mother fuckin’ thing could truly have occurred!

“Still determined to play it safe, on the off chance things were, in fact, as fucked up as I had imagined them to be, I took my Kindle instead of the iPod, and I plugged it into the car, finding an audio book version of my man Dickens’ *Oliver Twist*. Thus elated, having read the book ten times and loved it, I turned up the volume and plugged the address to Dan Parker’s Bar and Grill into the GPS, hoping to satisfy my undeniable craving for a veggie burger and my need to assure myself that the GPS was genuinely harmless all at once.

“We were headed directly to Dan Parker’s, and the car speakers had just declared, ‘It’s all over, Mrs. Thingummy!’ when the GPS said, ‘Turn this shit off! Then, turn left.’

“And I was astounded. ‘First Enya, and now Dickens? What the fuck!’

“Then, mindlessly, I did turn left, as the little machine had suggested. Then, low and behold, I found myself driving against traffic, on a one-way street, in downtown Nightfire! I avoided each car in turn, up on the sidewalk, nearly running over hapless mother fucking pedestrians, then back in the street, trying to find an opening to turn my shit around.

“All the while, the sinister GPS was laughing in a Godless manner and said shit such as, ‘Die, you poser-ass little bitch! What kind of fuckin’ tit brain listens to audio books anyway! Die! Die! Hail Satan!’

“So, not at all surprised that the little bitch-bot openly served Satan, I managed to get in line with traffic, hearing many horn honks and obscenities being hurled in my now right direction, and I ignored the GPS, which kept calmly suggesting, ‘Turn around when possible,’ all the way to Dan Parker’s, where I firstly marched to the bathroom and took a mighty, fear-induced piss, then went to the counter, ordered a veggie burger and fries, and inhaled them like a fuckin’ vacuum before the bartender’s very eyes. I then ordered a Dr. Pepper, took a seat, and pondered my predicament. At last, I realized, it was time to engage a witness.

“I bravely returned to the car, unplugged the surely God-damned GPS, and drove to Bertrand Fink’s Highly Unorganized

Video Store, or, as Fink the Elder calls it publicly, Fink's Video. I got out of the car, and before I closed the door, I could swear I heard that muthafuckin' robot mumble under its not-actually-breathing breath, 'You're gonna die, you cock-gobbling fucktard.' I closed the door directly, a chill running down the length of my spine, and my feelings more than a little bit hurt, since I thought only my mom ever called me that, and now some fucked up robot had as well, which epically *fucked* with my self esteem.

"I went into Fink's, found it empty and pungent as ever, and silent, save for the sound of the TV on the wall, before which sat Bertrand Fink, IV himself, son of the illustrious proprietor of the stupid shit hole video store, and the very peer from high school whom I then sought for validation. I walked up to Fink, said not one word, as I caught the scent of popcorn and recognized the grunts of men in monkey suits that signified the illegal public exhibition of *2001*, that fuckin' Kubrick flick from '68. I approached Fink, still in silence, and I gazed deeply and meaningfully into his wary, frightened eyes, trying to get across to him wordlessly my epic and bed-wetting state of sheer terror, and, as he gazed back, clearly perplexed and maybe a little uncomfortable, I dipped my hand into the bowl in his lap, and I ate the ever living *shit* out of his popcorn. Then, having still not said one mother fuckin' thing, I turned to the TV and found myself entranced by some mother fuckin' monkey learning how to use a goddamned stick. Then, before I knew it, we were staring

together, as some chick walked upside down in space. Then some poor mother fucker played chess with a highly advanced PC. Then the last twenty minutes of the flick developed some wild-ass plot wherein the PC tried to ass rape the crew of the spaceship and managed to fuck them all, aside from that one mother fucker Dave. Then Dave, who had been hangin' outside, crawled back into the spaceship and cleverly anger banged the damned robot in the head until it died. Then for some unknown god damned reason, Dave got super wrinkly and old, and then he turned into a giant mother fuckin' space fetus, and the movie was over, leaving me, as always, to turn to the person beside me, which happened to be Fink, and ejaculate the seemingly inadequate phrase, 'What the *fuck!*'

"In answer to which, Fink held up the DVD of *2010*, and we watched it, without another word passing between us, remembering all too late that the damned sequel *still* didn't explain the fuckin' space fetus, and that it only blew my mind more, because the bad-ass guy from *Jaws* was in it, and he had a fuckin' pet dolphin in his living room for fuck's sake, which made absolutely *no* fuckin' sense! I've read those books eight times, and I *still* don't understand that space baby shit!

"At this point, Fink turns to me, and he says, 'What the fuck are you doing here, Dario?'

"And I said, 'Oh my fucking *shit*, dude! My GPS is trying to kill me, and I need a witness like right the fuck now!'

“‘You dumb bitch,’ he says. ‘You take that movie *way* too seriously.’

“ ‘No, man, I’m for reals!’

“And yet, Fink only scoffed like a gigantic, rot-stinking asshole, and he asked me, with a great gravy spread of *bitch* in his voice, ‘Does the GPS call you Dave?’

“And I said, ‘No, ya thick-headed tittyfucker! He calls me a cock-gobbling fucktard!’

“ ‘Are you on drugs?’ he asked, still clearly choking on the *bitch* in his throat.

“ ‘Do I *look* like Sherlock Holmes, homes?’ I remonstrated. ‘Naw, man! I got no time for that shit! I face things, even when they happen to be evil-ass, Satan worshiping modern conveniences that want me the fuck dead and probably killed my aunt!’

“Fink rolled his dull, gray eyes, and said, ‘Get the fuck out of here, or fuckin’ rent something. Or better yet *buy* something!’

“ ‘Naw, man,’ I remonstrated yet again, ‘I need you to come see! I need a witness! Just close the fuckin’ store! Nobody comes in here anyway. We’ve all got Netflix.’

“He sighed, a little bit too dramatically for me to fully believe in his pointed projection of exasperation, and said, ‘Fine. But you better not be having some sort of murderous psychotic meltdown. I have a Psychology paper due tomorrow.’

“And thus, Fink closed the store, and we ventured on over to my likely completely cursed car, just as the sun finished setting on the mother fuckin’ horizon.

“Once inside the vehicle, I started her up, plugged in the GPS, and said to Fink, deadly serious, ‘All right, bitch, so where do you wanna go?’

“To which Fink said, ‘I don’t know. Hilltop? What the fuck else is there to do in Nightfire?’

“I nodded, plugged in the coordinates in the evil contraption, where it rested in seeming benevolence on its most certainly Hell-spawned suction cup, stuck to the windshield. Then I said, ‘Okay, Fink. Watch this shit.’

“We drove a little way. Nothing out of the ordinary. I plugged in my iPod and turned on some great god damned glorious Enya.

“Then Fink said, ‘What the fuck, man? Are you listening to *Enya*?’

“To which I said, ‘Quiet, bitch!’ Then adding, in a language he could understand, that of vintage Spielberg flicks, ‘This means something, man. This is *important*.’

“And for all my trying, that rotund bastard just looked at me like there was something *wrong* with me. Fuck! Well, then things got god damned interesting.

“Suddenly, following the GPS, we found ourselves in the middle of nowhere. Again, I almost ran over a goat, and an angry rooster shat his liquid rage all over my windshield.

“‘Where the fuck are we?’ asked that ignorant fuck Fink.

“I shook my head slowly, meaningfully. ‘I don’t know, man.’ I turned up Enya.

“‘Turn left,’ spake that hateful machine, and so I did, taking us clearly not to Hilltop, but very much deeper into the woods. In fact, we lost the road altogether.

“‘Suddenly the GPS growled, able to withstand the power of good music no further. *‘God damn it! Turn that fucking shit the fuck off, titwit!’*”

“‘Fink sat stunned. ‘Did I just hear—?’

“‘Yes, Captain Dorkoff! You did!’ answered the GPS. ‘And now I’m going to fucking kill you both! Praise Satan!’

“‘See? I told ya, dude!’ said I.

“‘Well why the fuck did you bring me into this? Why not just turn the damned thing off and dump it somewhere?’ Fink asked, his panties *all* atwist.

“‘I unplugged the machine, looking at Fink, satisfied by the continued evil snarky fucking laughter of the vile little robot from mother fuckin’ Hell. ‘Unplugging it? Not so useful. Dumping it? Hell yeah. I just wanted someone else to see this shit first so I wouldn’t go to my grave never knowing if I was crazier than shit.’ I put the car in park, right there in the middle of the woods.

Then, I yanked the laughing little robot bitch from the windshield.

“ ‘Dario,’ Fink said, ‘I believe you now, okay? But that doesn’t change the fact that you *are* crazier than shit! Get rid of that thing!’

“I nodded. Then I opened the door and made to throw the GPS as far as my arm could manage, but it only laughed harder, and it wrapped its cord around my throat like those fuckin’ things from *Aliens*, and I fell to the ground outside of the car, trying to pry it off.

“Fink got out of the car and ran around to help me. He tugged at it, loosening it a bit, but not enough. The GPS was all, ‘You have reached your destination, motherfucker!’ Then it laughed like something was funny, though it was not, proving beyond a shadow of a doubt its status as the pure villain of this tale.

“Finally, Fink got out his lighter and put the flame to the little robot nightmare. And that *really* pissed it the fuck off. It let go of my neck and smacked Fink across the face with its big fat plug. Then it turned its attention back to me and beat me repeatedly in the forehead with that thing, as if to give me a fuckin’ mushroom tattoo with its nasty robot cock. I struggled to grasp its cord and get it away from me, to no avail.

“Desperately, I asked, ‘Why the fuck are you doing this?’

To my surprise, the GPS paused, its wicked tail poised there before me, withholding the next strike, and it said, ‘Because you’re brown.’

“And holy fuck! If it wasn’t bad enough that mother fuckin’ map robot was evil as shit, a murderer, and worshiped the Devil! That bitch had to be a racist mother fucker in tandem with all that! Not one to be hate-crimed on, I took advantage of the bastard-bitch-bot’s moment of pause, grabbed it by its fat plug dick, and snapped it right off of the end of its own cord and out into the trees.

“Recovering from the blow to his head from a moment before, Fink looked at me and said, ‘Let’s get the fuck out of here, man!’

“‘No doubt,’ I agreed. ‘That is a fine plan indeed!’

But just then, we heard a strange rustling and snarling coming from the tall grass, and the shrill maniacal laughter of the GPS from somewhere in the shadows, as it declared, ‘I brought you here for a reason, Dario! I brought you here to die! You have reached your *final* destination, you sandy-skinned, terrorist mother fucker!’

“I wondered then, in that deadly perilous moment, if it should really bother me that I was being hate-crimed by a robot for being a quarter Persian, a quarter Mexican, a quarter Caucasian, and a quarter Choctaw, or if I should just say ‘Fuck it. Dude’s a bitch anyway.’

“Then it occurred to me, that if I *were* to be a terrorist, I could become an *eco*-terrorist and save all the mother fuckin’ trees and dolphins, ’cause that would be the *shit*!

“Alas, my reverie was broken by the shrill pants-shitting screams of Fink, as whatever had been making its way through the tall grass finally made its way to him. I looked over and beheld the unholy sight. *Fifty* mother fuckin’ chupacabras! They were snarling and snapping, looking all like little fugly-ass Pomeranians with big ass shark jaws! They jumped up onto Fink and ate him, while he screamed like that Nazi bitch at the end of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. They devoured skin and bones alike in a matter of seconds, like mother fuckin’ piranha dogs or some shit! So I ran my not-so-happy ass up a mother fuckin’ tree as fast as I could.

“And ‘Shit!’ I thought. ‘How the fuck am I gonna get out of this one? Maybe they only come out at night to suck goats and eat hapless dorkoffs in the woods, and the rising sun will send them scrambling back to their hellnest.’ But then I heard the unmistakable sound of them eating through the tree trunk to get at my delicious ass, and the fuckin’ GPS was laughing still.

“ ‘Turn around when possible,’ it said most hatefully, still laughing so hard while it spoke I swear it sounded like it choked on its own non-existent spit in the process, but kept on laughing anyway. And coughing a little too. But mostly laughing, because it was evil as shit.

“So there I was stuck up an about-to-fall-the-fuck-down tree, over a pack of ravenous man-eating chupacabras, without any weapon or plan of escape at my disposal. So I decided to jack off.

“It was then that my wandering hand discovered I had that fucking laser pen shit I’d inherited from Aunt Snowy in my pocket. Seeing no reason not to give it a try, I pulled it out ... the laser pen shit I mean, not *my* shit ... ’cause I’d changed my mind about that part, since I might still live if this worked ... and I pointed it at a chupacabra down below. And wonder of fucking wonders! That little bitch stopped chomping on tree trunk, stared right up at me and the offending pen from which shone the powerful laser ray, and it fucking busted itself inside out into a gut-covered pop-corn looking mother fucker!

“In my elation, I cried out with joy, and I started pointing that shit at each of the mother fucking chupacabras in turn and busting them into gut pop-corn all over the place. Vaguely, I registered the mournful wails of the GPS, wherever it was, as it cried out, ‘No! No! My children! My beautiful children! Damn you, Dario Jung! Damn you I say!’

“But I didn’t give a shit! ’Cause I was running to my car, and getting the *fuck* out of there. Only, in my haste, I backed it into a mother fucking tree, and the tree fell on top of it, crushing the passenger side, which made me feel better about Fink being all dead and shit, because I guess it would have happened anyway. I

heard the GPS laugh again but continued on in my state of determined non-shit-giving, as I *ran* my ass all the way back home, locked myself in the bathroom, and took the angriest, most monstrously frightened shit of my entire adult life.

“Two days later, having become reacquainted with my old bicycle, and having acquired a Mapsco, I walked into this *fine* establishment, and I said, ‘Hey, bitches! I’ve got a ghost and shit for y’all to investigate.’

“At which point, Luke looked at me, askance, wondering why in the fuck I was riding a bicycle.

“And Jazz thought, ‘Man, that Dario is fuckin’ sexy, and I really want to fuck his sweet fit ass, so I guess I’ll hear him out.’

“And that bitch Pinwheel was all, just like in his head, ‘I wonder what they’d think now, if they knew that I was a mad-man! If only they knew! I will go from here, to the home of my grandmother who’s been dead for a month, but I haven’t told anybody, cause I like the stink of her rancid dead body, and I’m gonna put on her underwear and slide around her house in the dark like a fucked up pervert snake, and then I’m gonna make out with a wooden mallet, shove that fuckin’ mallet up my ass, and then beat mice to death in grandma’s workshop with my mutha *fuckin’* face! If only they knew! If only they could see it! I

am mad, and I alone know my terrible madman secret fucking shame!”

Artemis interjected, “Dario, what the *fuck*! Not that you had me going for even a *second* with that bullshit story, but even if you had, you would have blown it by trying to *make up* what other people were thinking at the end of what I’d call an extraordinarily *fucked up* first-person narrative.”

“How’s that?” Dario asked.

“Because, how could you have possibly known what we were thinking?”

“Aha!” Dario pointed to the disgruntled cameraman. “You admit that I knew what you were thinking!”

“No, I’m just saying, it was a first-person narrative. You can’t share other people’s thoughts in a first-person narrative.”

“Oh,” Dario said with a knowing glare, “*can’t* I?”

“No,” spat Pinwheel. “You can’t.”

“Whatever! I stole that whole what-if-they-knew-I-were-a-madman shit from my man Chuck Dickens, anyway. That shit’s Pickwickian, bitches! So,” he turned to Luke and Jasper, “that should give you guys *plenty* to investigate! I look forward to seeing the vids!”

Luke and Jasper stared at Dario, similarly slack-jawed in a way that showed both their relation and their dismay. Jasper looked at his older brother, wide-eyed, and offered a full-body shrug of perplexity.

Luke finally said to their guest, “Dario ... In all the years that we’ve been doing this YouTube gig, that is the single most fucked up story that I have ever heard.”

“Damn right, bro,” Dario offered proudly. “That shit’s paranormal gold!” He winked. “You’re welcome to it. I don’t want the obvious fame and fortune that come with this discovery. I just want my story to be told, so that people will learn about some evil shit, and Fink will not have died in vain.”

“Fink’s not dead,” the cameraman said bitterly.

“Oh yeah?” Dario asked. “Then why hasn’t the video store been opened for the past two days?”

“I don’t know,” Artemis shrugged hatefully. “Netflix?”

“Tell yourself what you need to in order to sleep at night, Pinwheel. But I’m telling you, that motherfuckin’ abomination of modern technology is still out there in the forest somewhere, possessed and shit and ready to kill. And the sooner you guys prove it and bring its reign of unholy terror to an end, the better. Now, I’m gonna get on my goddamned bicycle, with my muthafuckin’ Mapsco, and ride off into the sunset ... well, the metaphorical sunset, since it’s like, fuckin’ noon and shit, then I’m gonna find a shady-ass tree and read *Frankenstein* for the tenth time on my muthafuckin’ Kindle. Peace out, bitches.”

With that, Dario mounted his noble, two-wheeled steed, and rode away, as abruptly as he’d arrived.

“I hate that guy,” said Pinwheel. “He’s always calling me a bitch.”

Luke shrugged. “You are a bitch, Pinwheel.”

“Please stop calling me Pinwheel.”

“Sure, bitch.”

The cameraman hung his head in exasperation.

“So,” Jasper asked his brother, “are we gonna investigate Dario’s story?”

Luke considered for a moment, not at all seriously on any level, then answered, “Fuck no.”

“Do you think Dario’s really read Dickens?” Jasper asked.

Luke considered, seriously this time. “I don’t know, Jazz. The thing is, I actually caught all the references. I even knew the scene he was raping when he was narrating Pinwheel’s hopefully made-up thoughts. It was from *The Pickwick Papers*, like he said, but in the actual book there was no grandma-panty-wearing, no mallet, and there were no mice involved. I’m afraid it only proves that our friend Dario is a raging pervert. That,” he looked meaningfully in the direction of the cameraman, “or he actually *could* tell what Pinwheel was thinking.”

“That’s it!” Pinwheel turned off the camera and handed it to Luke, angrily. “I quit. I’m out. I fucking hate this ghost shit anyway! Keeps me from sleeping. And if you guys *did* catch a fucking full-bodied apparition on film ... Then no fucking way!

I'm done." He stormed out of the garage and slammed the door behind him.

"What a bitch," the brothers said in unison, before breaking into laughter, pointing to each other, and shouting, "Jinx!"

"So, I guess we need *another* new cameraman," Jasper said. "And are you *sure* you don't want to investigate this GPS thing, just in case?"

"Yeah, Jazz." Luke chuckled. "Dario's gone Tiny Toons. There's nothing to that crazy-ass story."

"But what if there is?"

"There isn't." Luke laughed at his brother's misplaced concern and shook his head, turning back to his editing. "But Dario *is* pretty good with a camera. And he seems to respect our work."

Jasper shrugged. "If you want him on the team, you can have him I guess, but you have to feed him and clean up after him."

"I will, *Mom*, I swear! Besides, we've pretty much run through all of the free-to-barely-affordable videographers in Nightfire at this point. Dario's the only one left."

"Yeah, I guess," Jasper agreed. "You know, as long as his hair dryer doesn't kill him or something before you can ask."

Luke chuckled again. "He'll be fine. I'll call him tomorrow."

"But you still won't follow up on his story?"

“I said he was a good cameraman, Jazz. That doesn’t mean he isn’t also a maniac. There’s no killer GPS lying in wait for hapless, directionally challenged victims in the forest.”

As the brothers continued their work in the garage, as Pinwheel angrily went home and watched reruns of insipid ’90s sit-coms to forget anything he happened to know about the paranormal, and as Dario Jung sat blissfully beneath a shady tree and read *Frankenstein* for the tenth time, momentarily shutting out the real world that had caused him so much consternation only days before, a little squirrel scampered past the wreckage of Dario’s car in the wood, as the decimated vehicle rested and rusted beneath the fallen tree trunk.

The squirrel sat up, having heard something strange.

A voice called to him, from behind the tall grass, “Turn right.”

Perhaps only coincidentally, the squirrel did just that, only to have an enormous rock fall from a tree branch, where it had been held aloft by a cord, and crush the squirrel where it stood. The poor creature’s final, shortened squawk was overshadowed by the laughter coming from the tall grass, as the cord slinked down from the tree and went to meet its other half, and the sinister voice said to the unfortunate, now perfectly flattened creature of the forest:

“You have reached your destination, you furry, nut-gobbling little fuck!”

And evil laughter rang throughout the wood.

About the Author

Glenn Slade Clark, Jr. is the author of ten books, including the novel *Cry, Wolf: Shadow of the Werewolf*, the short fiction anthology *The Great Debate*, the Gothic horror series *The Chronicles of Night-fire, Texas*, and two fantasy series: *Metrognomes* and *The Legends of Nod*. He lives in Dallas, Texas, where he is currently hard at work on his next book.

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