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## Deeds Do Tell

by John Rockwell

On the seventh day the Lord looked down on the earth, saw that it was good, and rested.

On the eighth day Sammy looked up and said, "Hey, I can do better than that."

God was not pleased. He'd given Man the ability to speak and all anyone every used it for was bragging. That and whining. It was always one of those two things, never, gee, thanks God, why don't you take a breather while we carry the load for awhile. Well, He was sick of it. They should have learned their lesson the last time He got mad and gave the world Hell.

"So you think you can do better than Me?!" His voiced boomed, shaking the clouds on it's way down.

"Wouldn't take much," Sammy said, looking back up at Him with a half-grin.

God stepped down from the sky. "Alright then, here's your chance. You tell me what to change and I'll change it. If the world turns out better,

fine. If it doesn't, well then that's fine too because this time you're the one they're going to blame. And I'll even give you eternal life so you can live here forever and not miss a word of it."

"Fair enough."

"I'm not done yet. There's one condition - you can't interfere with Man's free will. He's got to have the same chance to mess up your world as he did Mine."

"No problem. He won't want to mess up mine. Let's start with something small shall we, saayyyy, toothaches. Get rid of them."

"Done. Now people won't know when their teeth hurt so they'll never get them fixed. You've just increased the risk of infection and it's end result - death."

"Maybe under the old rules, but this is my world now, remember? In my world people's teeth fall out once a year and new ones grow right back in, just like sharks teeth. And they don't all fall out at the same time either. Think you can handle that?"

"Of course. It's already done. But now what are you going to do with all the dentists you've just put out of work?"

"The same thing You did with the fingerologists."

"Fingerologists?"

"Yeah, you know, fingerologists - the people who don't have jobs because you didn't make us with fingers that fall off when they wear out. They found other work, and so witll the dentists."

God shrugged. "Alright, so you made one tiny improvement that didn't hurt anyone. Big deal. If toothaches were all you had to complain about then you didn't have much worth saying."

"Don't worry, I'm just getting started. I only took care of that one because you missed it. For my next move I'll need a roach." He held out his hand and God conjured up a small German cocklroach for him. "No, I want a real roach. One of those big fat Florida ones that make you jump out of bed in the middle of the night when you find them crawling across your legs. You

know the type - they leave a white pus smear all over the place when you squish them."

God took back the little roach and gave him one that was almost too big to hold.

"Great, that's more like it," he said, grabbing one of its spindly legs and dangling it in the air. "Here, have a bite." He shoved the roach right under God's nose.

The nose clearly didn't appreciate it. God stared at Sammy with wonder, and a fair amount of anger. "And just how will this improve the world?" He asked.

"It won't. I don't really expect you to eat it though. I just want you to get a picture in your mind of what it would feel like to eat it, or see the uneaten half of one sticking out of a sandwich where you just took a bite. Pretty disgusting, huh?"

"We could have agreed on that without a demonstration."

"Right, because you're just like us, you've got the disgust reflex."

"So? What's your point?"

"My point is you did a half-assed job when it came to this reflex. You should have made people get that exact same feeling, times ten, the minute they thought about molesting or murdering a kid. Go ahead and fix it now. And make the disgust mandatory, not like you did with the roaches where some people can eat one without even thinking about it. If that thought isn't enough to stop them, then give them a migraine before they can do any damage." God started to make the change but Sammy stopped him. "Wait a minute. Let's make sure you don't pull some kind of leprechaun trick here. I don't want you taking me so literally we wind up with a disaster on our hands. I want to make abuse disgusting, not a simple spanking or slap on the leg. Got it?"

"Yes, I've 'got it' as you say. Disgust under reasonable circumstances. Alright, done. What's next then?"

"A little criticism maybe? Don't you want to try convincing me I'm screwing things up?"

"No. If you want the children who would have died from abuse to die from starvation instead, then that's your choice."

"What makes You think they'll starve to death?"

"Because Time makes every life saved a numbers game. The life you save usually isn't any the worse for the saving, but once someone's saved they can have descendants, and their descendants tend to have descendants. Thousands of years later you wind up with too many people to feed - and millions die because one was saved."

"Oh that. Not to worry. That's the way your world was. In mine they'll be room and board for everyone."

Let's stick with the small stuff for now though. Speaking of small," he said, holding up the roach again, "shrink this. None of these critters needs to be over half an inch long. And make them smell like lysol when you squish them." He gave God a minute to do what He was told and then went on. "This is kind of fun, isn't it? Makes You sort of wish I was around when You were drawing up Your plans, doesn't it?"

"Yes, but not for the reason you think. Please continue."

"Okay. I want to help out the people who were unlucky enough to get old under Your set of rules. Since some of them can make it to a hundred without losing their sight or hearing, I don't see why we can't let them all make it that far in the same shape. So, let the blind see and the deaf hear. And let the elderly lame walk too. These people have already had all the descendants they're going to have so we don't need to worry about them crowding up the place now do we?"

God almost smiled. "Would you like Me to cure all the blind, deaf, and lame while I'm at it?"

"Nah, that's just the kind of leprechaun trick I was talking about. Just keep aging from causing any of those things."

God waved His hands and did it even though He looked a little disappointed.

"Great," Sammy said. "Now let's really clean house. I want to yank

Death's chain next."

God rolled His eyes. "Please don't tell Me, let Me guess - you don't want anyone to die right?"

"Wrong. Your omniscience must be slipping. I don't want anyone to die for a stupid reason. Get rid of all the childhood diseases. We won't be needing them any more."

"Forgive Me, but that brings up that silly question again, which, by the way, you still haven't answered. What are you going to do when you can't grow any more food because you're too busy growing people?"

"Simple, I'll make more food and less people. How's it coming with those diseases?"

"They're gone. Now let's see how you keep everyone from starving without making up some unnatural law of nature."

"I'll teach You to have faith in my yet," Sammy said, smiling. "Know anything about Spanish Moss?"

"Everything. Why?"

"Tell me a little about it then."

"You would call it an airplant, your scientists would call it an epiphyte, and I would call it hardly worth mentioning. It grows on trees, gets its food from them, and generally does nothing but hang around. It's also the favored adornment in pictures of southern mansions. Is that sufficient?"

"Almost. They don't hurt the trees they grow on, do they?"

"No. Why?"

"I just wanted to make sure it was another example of Your failures. You should have stocked it with more vitamins than the plumpest fruit and made it taste like cotton candy. Since You're letting me play god for awhile, we can fix that right now. Create what I just described, let it grow in every climate, and make sure Man's the only kind of animal that likes it. You better make it come in a licorice flavor too. Some people don't like cotton candy."

God waved His hands again. "There, your will is done. Half an answer doesn't solve the problem though. People are still going to breed themselves right out of your banquet."

"Which brings us to the biggest mistake you ever made - from now on women aren't going to get periods. They'll have four ovaries, each one as easy to control as the fingers on their hands. They'll be good for only one birth and they'll stay shut until a woman decides she wants a baby. Then she'll just relax them for ohhh, say about three days, and an egg will be produced. It will stay just an egg though until both parents agree on the child's sex. As soon as they do, voila, conception." Sammy could see God was doing some pretty heavy thinking and decided to increase the weight. "Just think, with this one simple change in biology there won't be any more kids born into poverty or out of rape. There won't be any more abortions either, which should please You.

Speaking of rape, take that disgust reflex we talked about earlier and make any guy who thinks about raping a woman feel it. You should have done that anyway, just to be fair. If this world's supposed to be some kind of spiritual testing ground then men shouldn't be tempted to commit a crime women can't commit.

Well, what do You think? Whose world would you want to live in?"

"Hell. I never said I'd want to live here," God said, smiling. "It looks like your world did turn out better than Mine. Enjoy it." He started to step back into the clouds.

"Hey, wait a minute. You're admitting my world's better than Yours?"

"Yes."

"But that would make You less than perfect. Less than God too."

"No, it only means My world was less perfect than yours. Whoever said it was supposed to be perfect though?"

Sammy scratched his chin. "No one I guess. I just kind of thought God would give it His best shot."

God laughed an honest laugh. "Oh, but I did, and I called it Eden. Man didn't like that one though so I gave him this one."