

Riya Aarini

Myra's Last Dumpster Dive

She lives in an insect-infested studio apartment. Centipedes crawl up through the drain pipe of her shower stall, frightening the living daylights out of the fifty year old. “They bite! I hate them!” she’d say to anyone within earshot. Red ants crawl across the cracks of her kitchen, and spiders share her home with her, albeit to the disfavor of Myra Perez, the inhabitant of the cheap studio.

It’s not unusual for Myra’s overtly-friendly neighbors, like Tom, to peep into her bathroom window and have lengthy conversations with her as she swathes her five-foot five-inch frame with soapy suds and a blackened sponge. After all, it takes two to tango and two to hold a conversation.

Myra keeps an eye on the dumpster situated in the parking lot of her apartment complex. On occasion, she’ll find useful items disposed into it. Once she found a lamp, still spanking brand new; and she helped herself. Now the lamp sits on her bed stand to give her light from which she scrutinizes the local newspaper, especially the obituary section, looking for the friends of friends whom she may have heard of.

Poor? No, no, no. Myra is not poor. She is just a utilitarian, a scavenger, a practical person. If it's new in the box and it's dumped in the dumpster, she'll have a go at it. It is her logic—and not an uncommon one at that.

But she has another side, a not-so-bright side that brings the attention of two beings. One being, like a furious spectacle, skyrockets up from below, while the other gently glides down from above. They meet in between, on earth, in the parking lot of Myra's home. It's a devil and an angel, and they aim to determine Myra's fate civilly and fairly:

The angel, clad in enormously-beautiful white wings, stoutly stated her position, "Myra has shown allegiance to the good!"

"Oh, nonsense!" said the devil. He was spewing fire and argued, "She has as much good in her as the emptiness in a half-empty bottle of Gatorade."

"Well, isn't that just how much all human beings have? Half good and half bad?" the angel pointed out. The angel was experienced in debating with the devil to determine the fate of human beings far and wide.

"Okay," said the devil, "how about the time Myra threatened to punch a store clerk in the face because she felt the clerk looked at her 'wrong'? She said she'd physically jump on her and knock the living daylights out of her until the

police came and took her away in handcuffs! Now that's aggression, and you, as an angel, don't need that in a civilized world."

"Perhaps you're right on some level, devil," said the angel. "But Myra helped up poor old Pat when the old lady fell on the snow in the office parking lot. Pat was grateful, but such a complainer," argued the angel. "Myra has a gold heart," mentioned the angel, with a sentimental gaze toward the sky. "Oh, I hope we take her," thought the compassionate angel.

"Gold, mold, what's the difference? I've heard her lie and exaggerate when it comes to her coworker who did not deserve to be treated in an unfair manner. She could have gotten her coworker fired. I think that's what she intended to do. Remember the innocent paperwork mistake one coworker made? Myra ran to the manager when no one was around, during early morning, and guffawed and yelled all kinds of hullaballos. And not one bit of it was true," said the devil.

"Now devil, at least some of it must have been true," argued the angel.

"Well, maybe it was true for Myra. She communicated it in such a way to make the coworker look really bad," retaliated the devil. "So Myra belongs to me!"

"Let's just play it out. I'll go first. If I had it my way," said the angel, "Myra would experience this:

“Myra dove into the dumpster once again. She thought she had seen a shining metal object, beautiful enough to encourage inspection. A brand new box of kitchen utensils lay in the dumpster. Myra’s eyes bulged out and a smile crept across her face. “Oh, oh! Look what I found!” Myra said to herself in a very excited tone. As she grabbed the box, she found an old lottery ticket stuck to it with chewed bubble gum. She grabbed the box and held on to the wrinkled ticket, placing the soiled paper into her moss-green utility pant pocket for safe keeping. Then she walked with a hop into her studio, a grin beaming across her face. She thought she’d make a nice dish of fish tacos for dinner with her newly-found utensils. She daydreamed of scooping up the fish with the newfound ladle. But when she got home, Myra quickly grabbed the used lottery ticket from her pocket. She stared at the ticket for five minutes. Then she said, ‘I’m going to play these numbers.’ And she did. And she won. Five million dollars.

“No, she does not live in her studio apartment anymore, and she has never gone dumpster diving since her big win.

“That,” said the angel, “is the way I play Myra. What about you?”

The devil said, “Myra’s fate will fall this way:

“As usual, Myra walked past the dumpster and noticed something long and made of brass. Her darting eyes zoomed in on the object. Recognizing it as a treasure worth her interest, Myra became so excited that she dove into the dumpster head first. The middle-aged woman hit her head on the very brass object that drew her in, and she experienced a severe concussion. She was fully inside the dumpster for hours, which turned into a couple days,

when, at their usual time, the garbage hauling truck came. The truck backed up and lifted the dumpster with Myra in it—still unconscious—and threw the contents into the top garbage heap, where it was slowly crushed to a pulp.”

The devil bellowed with booming laughter that bounced off the tops of the apartment buildings. “She belongs with me. You see, angel, she is likely to commit more evil, unless I snatch her up and transport her to a fitting place where her kind swelter day in and day out in pits of fiery heat. There, Myra will never go dumpster diving again!”

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