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The Greedleville Gazette

or:

Bizarre Goings-On, Strange Happenings, and Other Curious Events

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The Oldest Town in America That Doesn't Exist

Fifty Three Minus Forty Eight: The Boy Who Could Not Do Anything

by Garrett McMahan

Once upon a time, in the quaint suburban town of Greedleville, there was a boy. This boy was a rather curious case, and was very different from other boys who lived in Greedleville. Of course, boys who are rather curious cases appear in all small towns everywhere, but if you take into consideration how strange most boys in Greedleville actually are, this boy was a very special case indeed. You see, while most boys would pass the time microwaving old TV sets, playing old Pat Boone records backwards to decipher hidden Satanic messages, or microwaving old Pat Boone records to decipher backwards Satanic messages in hidden TV sets, this boy would have none of that. Because this boy was absolutely incapable of physically, mentally, or emotionally doing anything at all.

He could not play back old microwaves backwards. He could not find Pat Boone hidden in them either. He could not eat or sleep. He could not laugh, cry, yell, speak, walk, skip, or jump. He couldn't get a paper route, he couldn't perform well in school, he couldn't play hopscotch, or set up lemonade stands, or drink lemonade, or even look at lemonade. And not just lemonade, he couldn't look at anything at all. No one ever knew what his name was because he could not be named.

Now, mind you, this isn't one of those cases where someone becomes so obese they become trapped in their own house. This boy could not grow, not even to obesity. He was also unable to be trapped. He couldn't

even occupy a house. On the other hand, of course, he couldn't go outdoors.

He could not join the Boy Scouts, and therefore he could not go on a camping trip, leave food out in the open, attract bears, and die from a vicious bear mauling. In fact, he couldn't die at all. Indeed, an attribute like this would be invaluable to a high risk institution like the military. However, he could not enlist, get drafted, fight, wear a uniform, or kill another person. This of course, was not because he was a pacifist, since he was unable to subscribe to any beliefs whatsoever. Besides, if he could, the pacifist wouldn't appreciate him anyway, since he was unable to respect and preserve life.

The fact that this boy had no beliefs worried several religious leaders of Greedleville, and as a result they gave extra attention to him, in hopes that they could save his soul. However, he could not receive this attention, and therefore he could not be persuaded. He couldn't go to Hell, or go to heaven, he couldn't be damned and he couldn't be saved. He couldn't be reincarnated, he could not be predestined, he could not sing a psalm, read the Bible, speak in tongues, get the spirit, offer burnt sacrifices, or bow to false idols. He also couldn't be an atheist. Besides, even if he was able to accept Jesus Christ into his heart as his Lord and Savior, which he wasn't, Jesus was apparently lost somewhere in the Midwest and wasn't taking requests at the time.

The boy's mother worried at first that it would be difficult raising a boy unable to do anything. However,

she became accustomed to his lack of activity. Since he couldn't go to school, that meant he couldn't get picked on by other children. She often found that she had a lot of time and money to herself, since he could not be taken care of or provided for. Since the boy could not make messes, she did not have to clean up after him. She never raised her voice at her son because he couldn't hear her anyway. She was also comforted by the fact that he would never drop out of college, live as a vagrant in back alleys, develop a serious case of depression and an alcohol and Quaalude addiction, commit crimes or sexual favors to support that addiction, or tragically take his own life. His father was simply happy that his son couldn't be gay.

However, the boy's mother soon found that life with a wholly incapacitated child, although simple, was far from worthwhile. He couldn't love her like a son should. He couldn't make her proud. He couldn't even be written off as a tax deduction. So, after a while, she pulled her husband aside and had a chat with him.

"I'm concerned about our son, dear. He just can't do anything. That's not normal for a boy his age."

"Ah, you worry too much. At least he can't be gay."

"But he can't fall in love with a girl, either," the mother replied. "We can't see our son at his wedding because he can't marry. Don't you see? Boys shouldn't have to live like that."

"He isn't living like that, though. He can't."

"Oh, bother," she grumbled. "That does it, I'm calling a doctor."

However, before she could make the call, immediately after a Samoan witch doctor two continents away hummed the theme song to *Friends* on a kazoo, the body of Doctor How rose from the grave and walked the earth all the way to the boy who could not do anything, his dead tissue suddenly reanimating itself. This was fortunate for the mother, since in life Doctor How specialized in the field of Extreme Stasis Syndrome research and treatment. He also owned a yacht that carried five elephants on it and intimately knew Harry Truman's cousin. Not that these facts are pertinent to the story, but who wouldn't want that going for them?

Doctor How excused the mother and father and

started to work. He came back into the living room after about five hours and approached the two parents, because to a newly reanimated corpse, medical work usually takes about five hours.

"Well," said the good Doctor, "I attempted to examine your son, and I came to some startling discoveries."

"Does he have Extreme Stasis Syndrome? I've heard a lot of boys have been coming down with that lately."

"Oh, no, it's not ESS, he's unable to contract syndromes. No, I'm afraid it's much more serious. Your son indeed cannot do anything. He can't be examined, diagnosed or treated. He can't even be visited by a doctor. Therefore, I can't be in this very room with you at this time at all."

And at that, Gene Simmons wrapped his tongue around the good corpse's head, ripped it clean off the torso, and swallowed it. The doctor took out a tape recorder from his coat pocket and pushed play.

"I found one more thing about your son that also concerns you two," spake the message on the tape recorder. "Since he can't do anything at all, it means that he couldn't have been conceived, couldn't have developed in the womb, couldn't be birthed, and therefore couldn't have a family. Which means that both of you actually don't exist."

And then the boy's parents disappeared. The boy didn't miss them because he couldn't feel lonely. He couldn't feel anything at all, actually. This didn't bother him at all, because he couldn't really think about it. According to Rene Descartes, a person who doesn't think can't possibly exist, and indeed, the boy could not exist. However, he also couldn't follow the philosophical theories of Descartes either. He couldn't even be a boy.

Then again, if this alleged boy indeed can't do anything, it is possible that he can't not be a boy either. It's possible that, if he can't do anything, he can't not do anything at all either. What is he then? Is he nothing? No, he can't be nothing. He can't be something either, however. How can someone actually not do anything in the first place? He really couldn't say. Maybe he can do a few things and he is actually lying to us. Alas, however, he can't lie. But how can he tell the truth?

How could anyone be sure that he can't do anything if he can't even be observed by anyone? Or, if he can't not be observed by someone, why doesn't somebody do it? Apparently, no one will ever know for sure, especially not the boy who could not do anything. After all, he can't. In fact, there was only one the thing the boy who couldn't do anything was ever able to do. Due to the fact that his existence was a paradox and he couldn't

exist and yet, he did, this monumental error created a massive rift in the space-time continuum that single-handedly destroyed the entire cosmos and all of its majesty.

And with that, the lonely life of the boy who could not do anything finally had purpose, and thus he could be erased from existence happy and fulfilled.

Obstinence Pledge Sweeps Nation

Teens and pre-teens all over the country are taking Obstinence Pledges through the marketing genius of one middle-schooler. Rather than the traditional Abstinance Pledges, where young adults swear off sexual intercourse until marriage, Obstinence Pledges encourage them to be disagreeable.

"I was in the mall the other day," recalls Obstinence Pledge founder, 13 year-old Katie Smythe, "and I saw this bratty three-year-old, and, like, he got what he wanted all the time. I knew that kids across the country wanted to get things done – like how I wanted my bellybutton pierced," which she shows with pride, "and I got it by being a bitch."

"Use of the pledge will encourage parents to acquiesce to our demands rather than questioning them," claimed one of the first collegiate-level adopters

HKNewsWire

of the Pledge, who agreed to be interviewed only upon conditions of anonymity, "This is a prime example of the application of game theory – as long as everyone follows the rules, everyone profits. Therefore, we need to have a mechanism to weed out the brown-nosers, and the Obstinence Pledge fulfills that."

Parents and instructors, however, are not as pleased. "If it wasn't illegal, I'd have smacked that bratty piece of – I mean, this 'Pledge'-thing is getting to be really annoying," said mother of four, Andrea Sanderson. "This is grade extortion on the highest level," extolled Josiah Phillips, a fifth-grade teacher from Brooklyn, Ohio, "I thought it was bad when the parents came in for parent-teacher and screamed at me for an additional five points on Billy's uninspired paper on *Ulysses*, but these kids are demanding 'A's on everything they do, or they won't behave!"

Wizard needs food badly.™



Live and Learn and Pass It On
a critical review

Never buy a house without a ^{simp}fireplace.
- Age 16

Why Learn to identify the music of Chopin, Mozart, and Beethoven? They're dead.
- Age 19

Stop blaming ^{undocumented aliens}others. Take responsibility for every

^{part}area of your ^wlife.
- Age 25

Don't mess with drugs, ^{cutting your coke with}and don't associate with
rat poison is a bad idea.
those who do.
- Age 66

Don't waste time responding to your ^{STDs.}critics.
- Age 12

Poetry

submit to
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Dream Awake By Peter C. Gravelle

with the water
she falls

down into
a place she knows
full of empty darkness
she is the only thing
that (cantwont) fills the space

behind her eyes

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