

There is a place, nestled in the tall pines and mountains that span the vast uncharted wilderness which reaches out over the Idaho-Washington-Canadian border, and lies either seemingly purposefully ignorant of the outside world or content without it. It's a small town, located too far away from any major or minor cities or towns to be accurately charted, and no roads lead in or out. Air traffic finds that there is no sensible route over the area, and there is little to no interest by either governments to warrant proper surveillance. In a one hundred and sixty thousand acre plot of land, not something too easily missed, they live in blissful defiance of the progression of civilization and technology (although many of the residents, their humble abodes, and township buildings do exhibit some of the advances we see often around us, but these are through simple evolutionary means). The residents can leave at any time, as many do, for there are absolutely no laws restricting contact with the outside world in any way, but with hundreds of miles of treacherous wilderness to get through, most don't make it out or back, and the troubling fact that communication in such a rural region can be, in the very least, completely and hopelessly impossible. There are three distinct rings to the place: the first being the town center fit with a square centered around a robust fountain and surrounded by (what the people would call) impressive high rises. The second ring holding the lines and rows of houses, each the same size, each the same color. The third, and last, ring holds the open and beautiful fields lousy with grain, grazing ruminants, and other such livestock or farming's lifeblood. Separated both physically and (some may say) emotionally from the rest of the world, they have marched on blindly, as any other state of society would. This strange place is called the Township of Windsford.

Only one man, a brave explorer by the name Mark Cupboard (there is some debate if he either adopted a pseudonym to protect his identity or if his astronomical adventures warranted a cover name, not unlike Homer), was able to transverse the mountain ranges, dense forests, and a small misplaced desert to find the backwards township, and what he saw shocked him, not by any specific way of gore, but by the rundown inside out logic the area holds as unspoken law. The people all mingle and speak like normal countrymen of any given state, but under their proverbial hoods their brains and inhibitions seem to act and react exceptionally antithetic to common thought.

For instance money, an estranging concept even to the most civil of people, has no place in this society in as simple a method as give and return. Being a self sustained architecture, the place doesn't thrive on trade or exchange, nor does it set up (what most would obviously think it would do) a socialist behavior. Rather, each individual resident operates as a separate island, they have the same sized house, the same lots of land, and the same rights and freedom as anyone else. This is not something that is regulated, but rather the natural logarithmic course of population restricts the townfolk to only owning so much land, any more and they would eat into someone else's plot or the edge of their world, which, it has been negotiated, would be more trouble than it's worth to expand (their very busy and regimented schedules conflict with the time tables for such a course of action, not to mention the rampant wildlife that hides in the shadows picking off the livestock and small, wandering children). Their only form of "*trade*" (quoted and italicized for the ludicrous behavior of it all) is interpreted from one of the most often referred scenes of the trip Cupboard made in the past decade, late in the year. It would be logical to think that a place like this would be void of social status, what with their equal standing for all and lack of monetary wants or trade, and of course Mark Cupboard's account of the township

completely contradicts such notions:

“On the third or fourth day (time seemed to have stood still and accelerated at oscillating velocities as I found myself so entranced and yet often uninterested in their various antics) while I was cataloging the types of pine needles hanging in the fountain in the city center (a contraption that harbored some lackluster sculpture attempts: the human faces were contorted in what looked like the joy of pain, or the pain of joy, and water would leak not just from the spewing mouths and ears but random, indefatigably placed cracks about the hideous thing) there came a raucous sound of yelps from a man in a flamboyant headdress made of the hip and neck bones of the goats and lambs he slaughtered (I found out he harvested them so just for the purpose of the attire, another extravagant display of inutility the township radiated). He marched about the fountain, about me, my mouth agape in the awe of the moment, followed by several young, hearty boys, themselves nude from the waist up, all hauling on their weathered backs bundles of walking sticks (a common job, I later learned, for the young and poor alike), each as intricately carved with swirls and faces and depictions of the town's heroes' myths (one displayed the tale of Sir Bernadette, and his travels through a Pekinese whore house, bestiality being a humorous and often referenced topic since they are aptly missing the moral backbone of Our Lord's King James Bible). During this facade he would take two, at times three, sticks off the 'r' shaped boys one at a time and smack them against each other, shrieking still, and pounding his bare feet against the road below him.

“This show (something that, at the time, I perceived to be agnostic) turns out is the proper way to display social status and power. It would seem that these sticks, these walking sticks of some sort of perverse art, is what the townsfolk all wish to acquire in mass since there is little to nothing else they can do so in the same manner. As the man stomped about the town square, gaggles of people poured from surrounding houses and establishments to watch and bow at him, amazed by the mass of sticks he had acquired either over an expanse of time or readily inherited, for there is little else to do with them once the eternal flame of their souls are diminished. What was more strange (for me, as it were) was that this tribal set up and costuming was unlike how the rest of the townsfolk dressed, much how I or you might be dressed now. Not only that, but the people were enamored by him, they gossip and swap stories about these high societal people with their clambering clanging sticks, and the only resolution I could find as to why this man was dressed the way he was, parading about with his sticks, causing the ruckus the rest were as fascinated in as a small babe may be in the futile display of jiggling keys or a rotating mobile, is that he has little to nothing else to do.”

These sticks, as described often times in Cupboard's account, are what the townspeople vie for. Since their food, lodging, and entertainment are all easily at hand or promptly procured, the only distinguishable difference happens to be these walking sticks. They come in all shapes and sizes, different brands and designs, with specific retailers taking only special favors to hand out such merchandise. The taller and more intricate the stick, the higher up the social ladder one can climb. There were reports that, during some strange, unsettling times, previous designs and lengths of sticks were voided in preference to others that made a more comfortable fit with the current trend of the age, forcing some high level families back to the grinder in order to regain their standing.

These establishments, the ones divvying out the sticks as mentioned earlier, would happily take on able people in order to accomplish a job (such as barn raising, cattle

slaughtering, basic road upkeep) in return for a meager dividend of walking sticks, the low level models that within months or years would be obsolete. The larger “*companies*” (again brought out and noted for their loose grip of the definition) seemed to employ vast numbers of people simply for the enjoyment of forcing their work. The pay of sticks being more robust and well preferred over the menial tasks more associated with manual labor, kept these poor souls as if by addiction to keep toiling away at their jobs. The lower and mid level jobs required proper dress, an elevated tongue, and a formal repose and professionalism. However the work couldn't be farther than how our own corporations operate. For eight to nine hours a day the people file into small open coffins and proceed to bang their foreheads on an slab of materials that differed with the office. Some had cuts of mahogany or birch, others marble and brick, and the sound of this horror resonates throughout the building during these normal working hours. Despite the farcical nature, these workers took their position very seriously and with a great amount of (in Cupboard's opinion) misplaced pride. They were not creating the new frontier of technology. They were not solving the problems of the modern world. They were not facilitating the progress of mankind. They pile into what should be their own personal hell and beat their brains out up to but not including the point of unconsciousness. They discuss and brag of their actions, they wish and pine for the days that they may be able to smack their heads against a treasured onyx or plastic compound slab, and they march home with puffed chests awaiting the next day with childlike glee.

There is a hierarchy even within these companies, with even prouder, solemn, puffer-chested men and women in better clothing would crowd into enclosed spaces and argue for hours on end what sort of slabs need banging and in what ways the banging can take place more “efficiently.” They throw epithets and compliments, they feast on the backs of the same bare-chested boys that carry the sticks around for the wealthy, and they take home a healthier batch of walking sticks than most anyone else, at times several bundles above and beyond what their lower level comrades are able to acquire.

The agrarian section of the township is made up by a more loyal band of proprietors, each with their own specific specialty (one, Cupboard recalled, had the best eggs, both in size and shape, another with the best strawberries, a third bred the best pigs and chickens, others with fields of wheat) and while they all were a more salt of the earth sorts of people, they would never back down from an exchange of the prized walking sticks over a simple swap of materials. Although the circles these farmers would reside in had little to no use for the sticks (as they all saw each other equally), they enjoyed the pleasant aroma and sight of seeing bundles of the things burning late at night, an act widely known and widely ignored among the more suburban types, something not to think about lest the sinking feeling of their unknown regret be noticed.

The ways of the religion are far from these lands, however they do follow (of some sort) strict deistic practices. They do meet on a regulated day (in the only instance Cupboard observed it happened on one of our Tuesdays, however the next Tuesday there was no such gathering), and they do seem to worship a higher being. Mark Cupboard's (unfortunately, due to space restraints and damage to the volume) out of context account follows the events of the “*religious*” assemblage:

“...with his hands bound behind his back, resting neatly on the top of his buttocks. It is a grand statue, of what I could not even begin to comprehend, but it closely resembled a bear engrained within the chest of a mess of other foraging animals. The head resembled a possible

deer, or a possible rabbit. At different angles I perceived a golden eagle. But this wasn't a joyous happening, these people were not here to praise our Heavenly Father as we do, in heart warming tales of faith and hymns to His unworldly grace, poise, and generosity. Here they spite their god, and each other, in the form of aggressive, repetitive chants that excite and arouse sexual inhibitions among the group, although they strictly and (as I saw on one occurrence) violently restrain and restrict anyone from carrying through with such lewd behavior. They parade, before the entire group, individuals that acted out against their sect, passing immediate judgment by spitting in their faces or nostrils, hurling insults and city junk (a ruptured water jug, a poor piece of pottery to begin with, was thrown and collided with the midsection of one of the insubordinates, cutting a ghastly gash down his abdomen. I later learned that while the rest were burned, he was left to bleed out on the floor). It was the boorish, loutish, and sadistic actions of this specific set of people that began my slow descent into what I could properly call hatred for the people of Windsford. The savages before me pushed the limits of proper human will and if I had the power to do so I would damn them, but Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ shall have to carry through with what I cannot."

Naturally, a place such as this is not devoid of crime, and a system of judgment is put in place in order to deal out justice to those that choose to break even the most basic of human laws. They stretch from petty theft to murder, and are often riddled with strange laws that, to some, would seem pompous and ridiculing. There are laws that restrict the act of masturbation or sodomy, others that deal harsh punishment for left-handed people and those without the ability to grow hair. Everyone is subject to follow these laws (except, obviously, the religious sect and its many festivals), and there is a single court that handles such matters. For instance, in an account that shall be paraphrased from Cupboard's historical nonfictional novel, there was a man convicted of murdering his wife. In this case, and with most of the others of the same magnitude, he is led into an open court that mirrors what we as civilized people would recognize: A judge, clad in a long (in this proceeding) speckled gray and purple robe, two opposing lawyers (or teams of lawyers), a jury made completely of randomly chosen peers, and (as anticipated) a defendant. It is here, however, that the similarities part, as the trial itself makes more a mockery of the democratic justice system than anything else. The main function of the trial is strictly on the shoulders of the jury, and the jury judges discretely on looks. The lawyers will parade around, sounding trumpets and lighting fireworks, all as an avid display to delight and distract the jury in either which way, the judge sits and regulates based on the noise and fire safety levels. For the trial of the man accused of killing his wife, the prosecution hired a cat juggler who rode a unicycle on a ring of fire around the defendant, while the defense loosened their pants and leap frogged about the room, expelling flatulence to a great extent, and beating themselves about the face, head, and neck with razor lined walking sticks. The man was eventually convicted to death because his belt buckle mismatched the autumn color highlights of his summer hair, despite the fact that he held little to no instruments that could gore his wife to death as easily as the buffalo could that were raised in the town center.

There is art (something that, until now, has only be represented by the reprehensibly created sculptures), where people, either well off or not, can use various ways to describe the world outside their minds in their own terms. Realistic and Surrealistic paintings exist, some of the river that runs through a small portion of the Southwestern sections of land, some that show what one would think is an inside out lemur and another their mother's insults and

disappointments. There is poetry and prose, but the most popular of which pertain to relatable situations either taken in more dramatic or comedic tones. Successful writers closely follow groups of strangers, writing utensil and tablet at hand, listening in and stealing various life stories (at one point, Cupboard observed, a writer would suggest certain situations the group could cover then spread rumors and lies amongst them to see a certain outcome). Many of these artists break from the everyday habits of their colleagues, dropping from their head smacking jobs to ponder a better life, a different life, a life above and beyond the subtle simplicities the rest of the township share as regulatory. They often end up accidentally starving to death, sitting alone in a field, thinking about such unsolvable problems, and more often than not this would cause their work to be widely distributed. This idiotic form would break down to the point where only a dead artist could sell *any* work, and thus artists would commit suicide almost ritualistically as early on in their lives as possible. The greatest artist of the time was a Ras Cally, who committed suicide at the ripe age of twenty seven months old. Although many social circles believe it was his parents who aided him, it hasn't stopped the tongues wagging and buying his unfinished works, cooing and awing at the potential artistic integrity lost and now exaggerated by those left behind.

Politics is a sticky game in Windsford. As there is no major office above that of mayor, there are a slew of other minor council-member chairs and city positions that are often vied for. These positions, however, are only available to those of very high social standing, not so much because of any restriction of law, but because there is no other way for the people of Windsford to vote. They recognize a face or name of one of the men or women who parade about the town square, smacking their sticks and baring their chests and headdresses, and that's who they inevitably vote for. Not based on campaign promises (all of which are broken in Windsford), or integrity or past violations, simply name recognition, a complete polar opposite to our proud political system built on the hard, sweat soaked backs of the salt of the earth politicians proud to serve their office. The campaign consists of a number of debates, all as derisory and insipid as the last, as the candidates gloat and float impossible to fulfill guarantees and stipulations backed by a sweet smile, stiff upper lip, and a wink. In the debate that Cupboard was able to sit in on, one man promised to fill the pockets of every citizen of Windsford with as many elaborately carved walking sticks and an extra mule, lamb, and goat for the farmers spitting their chewing tobacco out on the floor in the back. The other suggested that he could travel back in time in order to right any wrongs against any citizen of any time period, but only if elected. "In the end," Cupboard writes, "It doesn't matter who wins the election. They both treat the office as a joke, a sanction of power to use and abuse the people of Windsford. They trade services meant for the sick and weak with subpar followthrough in order to fulfill their deepest, wildest desires. It's a farce, and it makes me sick to think that these disgusting people can take such a pure system and dilute it so with the oil of their greed."

All in all, the Township of Windsford is a place segregated from the world, perhaps for a reason. While their family life, where they bond and stick closely to their convictions and loyalties, and medical treatments may not differ much from our own, it seems that the bigger functions of the area are heavily and heftily placed on the exact opposite end of the logical spectrum. There may be a day that this township may be opened up to the real world, possibly more so than this paper can ever dream of being capable of accomplishing, but from the words of one of the greatest explorer of the last century: "Windsford is a backwards place, a Godless place, a barbarian's haven. It is ripe with the sickening likelihoods of a Sodom and Gomorrah,

the people hold the same morals of a Jericho, the number of Judas Iscariots, Jezebels, Herods, and Levites are in a horrifying abundance, and I make such equations so dexterously that it makes me fear for the souls of the people of this contemptible place. I pray that they stay within this cage of wilderness that harnesses them, that they never smarten up to how easy it could be for them to find their way to normal life, but alas I cannot say such an action will never occur. I plead to God, Our Lord, that I die before the day comes that they will inevitably be let loose into our world.”