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Carpe Diem

BY DAVID FARBER

As the story goes, two men decide to walk the beach after a terrible storm. In search of companionship, they turn to one another and find comfort in the rippling waters. The sun begins to distance itself from the sky. The waves crash harmoniously. The older man seeing the beachfront from above exclaims, "A perfect image." Nods of agreement are exchanged. The two continue to make their way down and soon begin to see the aftermath of the storm. The sea is calm, the beach is clear, even the surrounding trees and bushes are in good shape. The beach, however, is saturated in starfish—thousands upon thousands. Without water they will most certainly die. Eager for the end as it brings resolution, they now sit on the beach, left only to gasp. The older man begins to pick starfish up, one by one. He gives them a long deep stare, as if almost eyeing them down, and with a flick of his wrist and a turn of his body, the old man throws them back into the ocean. The younger man's reaction is filled with astonishment. He blurts out, "Valiant and intrepid yes, but you can't possibly make a big difference. There are far too many of them and too few of us . . . in the scheme of things, your efforts do not matter."

Isaac Newton once spoke of the world as a facility for balance. He wrote, "For every reaction there is an equal and opposite reaction." For every minute of joy there is a minute of sorrow. For every life granted there is a life taken. For every tear there is a grin. For every body there is a soul. For every light there is a shadow. For every loner there is a family man. For every ounce of confidence there is a moment of insecurity. For every right remark there is a wrong one. For every second gained, a second is lost. On a more tangible level, for every Republican there is a Democrat. The world is an amalgam of opposite forces acting upon one another. The balance is the harmony, where good and evil and right and wrong combine. This is our everyday life. The world is not isotropic, for if it was, how can one determine delight without the presence of misery? A world of only solitary happiness stands to be only sadness. How can one equate happiness without a moments sorrow?

Amongst an ongoing struggle for stability and equilibrium I often question who/what/where balances me? Where's my other half? In the life that I have been given,

whose has been lost? In often questioning my place in this life, I frequently wonder of the numerous forces that push and pry within. My ongoing battle with movement in conflicting directions must be exhausting. Some of it is already lost. My natural state cannot be the one with which I am most familiar. I often feel my intrinsic innate inspiration and drive is no longer. Popular Culture has penetrated me and I have been blindly convinced by it and enclosed within it. Success is the wealth measured in dollars, is it not? At one point I would have believed it to be measured in good deeds. The struggle for balance here is lost.

For every battle won there is a battle lost, for every moment chaotic there is a moments peace. For every year gained there is a year lost, for every blind ounce of faith there is one who questions. Is that in fact true? In thinking recently of the Trade Center disaster, I question faith more now than ever. For what is faith but unknown—a sense that something else exists simply because something else, well . . . exists. It is not tangible, is not understandable, it is not even noticeable. Thousands of innocent people and children recently died for what is known as faith. Faith alone became something larger than innocent lives and helpless victims. For it became impetus and reason to strike terror in its most cowardly and deceitful way. Faith in its most extreme and strongest hour is deadly. It erases and quiets questions for what appears to be defying answers. Religion is diverse and utterly cherished, and for good reason. Historically, it has single handedly cost millions upon millions of lives. It will continue to do so, for it rings true to so many. Religion is important; it has its moments, and carries purpose and significance. I do not insult it and those who adhere to it—I only desire to elicit question to that which blindly kills. For it is without debate people die for religion, lives are lost, and children's futures are erased. All for faith, for that which they believe—for it becomes justified to kill for that which motivates. It can be re-stated then . . . For every blind ounce of faith there exist few who question. The struggle for balance here is lost as well.

The world is not in equilibrium; starfish die, innocents die, good does not always balance evil. My place in this world is unknown. My other half is unknown. But to be that old man, to restore balance and life, that is a noble fight. That is a life worth living. That is success and how it should be measured.

The old man, looking over his newest patient, smiles for just a moment, bliss if but for a second, returns and looks back at the starfish. As he raises the starfish to the sky he assertively turns to the younger man. "Ahh but that is where you are wrong. They matter, they matter to this one I hold in my hand right here. For him, this is important." The old man proceeds to give the starfish a long deep stare, and with a quick flick of his wrist and a turn of his body, returns the fish to sea.