

The Prophet Who Was Never Wrong

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When I was a young man (began the Reverend Billy Karma), and just starting out on the preaching trail, I came across a true quirk of Nature -- a pair of brothers who were Siamese twins, joined at the hip. I did my best to uplift their spirits, but they felt abandoned by God, and one day they walked out during a thunderstorm and begged Him to strike them down with a bolt of lightning and end their misery.

And damned if the Good Lord didn't do just that. His aim was a little off though, probably due to the poor visibility, and instead of killing them the lightning actually split them apart. The shock sent 'em both into a coma, and they lost a lot of blood, but somehow or other they were found and taken to a hospital before they could expire, and there they lay, day in and day out, tied in to dozens of tubes and wires.

And then one day one of 'em opened his eyes and asked where he was and what had happened to him, and the staff calmed him down and explained the situation to him, and the Lord granted another miracle and brought him back to perfect health within a week.

One afternoon, just before he was due to leave the hospital, he mentioned that he wished he didn't have such an ugly scar on his left hip -- and lo and behold, the scar vanished almost before the words were out of his mouth.

"I wish the sun would break through all the clouds," he said, and a second later the sun did just that.

It was then he realized that he'd been doubly blessed by God, that anything he wished for would come true.

Now, he hadn't ever prepared for a profession, since there ain't a lot of jobs open to one-half of a Siamese twin team, but now he decided to set up shop as a prophet. On the surface of things, it would appear that he didn't actually need a job, since he could just wish for a million credits or a castle with maid service ... but he wanted to thank the Lord for the miracle, and he figured the best way to go about it was to make other people just as happy as God had made him.

First thing he needed was a name, so he called himself Isaiah the Right -- Isaiah for the Old Testament prophet, and Right because he'd been the twin on the right when they were still attached. He took off just long enough to marry the prettiest girl around, and then he hung out his shingle and started prophesying in earnest.

Problem was, God, who can have a pretty mordant sense of humor when the mood strikes Him, put a little backspin on the ball.

For example, some poor unhappy soul would seek him out and ask for a prophecy, and Isaiah the Right would peer into his crystal ball (which actually held a hologram of Tassle-Twirling Tammie Twilight doing the act that was famed from one end of the galaxy to the other), and he would intone something like, "You shall have wealth beyond imagining." And the man would thank him and go off to prepare for his windfall.

But it never came. Which makes a twisted kind of sense, when you come to think of it, because there ain't nothing beyond a man's imagining, and nothing is exactly what he got.

Still, if it was just the prophecies that were theoretically dead on but never actually came to pass, it wouldn't have been so bad. But every now and then Isaiah would get something like a 400-pound girl with acne and crooked teeth who wanted to be beautiful, and he'd peer into that ball (thoughtfully hiding

its contents from onlookers) and pronounce that "Tomorrow morning you shall be the most beautiful woman on the planet."

And sure enough she would be -- but only because every other woman on the planet woke up weighing 500 pounds with eczema and a mouthful of cavities.

I think maybe the worst was the politician who crossed his palm with the mandatory silver and some optional 12-carat diamonds. Isaiah told him that after the election he could climb the highest mountain in the world and he would be the master of all he could see. Sure enough, the poor bastard went blind on election night.

Well, things just went from bad to worse, and finally Isaiah the Right wished that he was back in the hospital right next to his brother, who was sleeping the sleep of the innocent.

That night Isaiah was mugged and robbed by three little old ladies with blackjacks, and sure enough he wound up one bed over from his brother.

Turns out his brother had woke up a couple of days earlier and been charged with seducing a couple of the nurses. He was taking a nap when Isaiah arrived, and he sure was sleeping the sleep of the innocent, because he later proved in court that he'd been in bed with Isaiah's wife at the very moment he was supposed to be with the nurses.

When Isaiah heard that, he had a seizure and went right into another coma, and everyone decided that it was better all the way around to just let him stay asleep, and he remains there in the hospital to this very day, the prophet who was never wrong.

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"So what happened to his brother?" asked Max.

"I thought you'd never ask," replied Billy Karma.