



ABSURDIST

#1 OF 5

A B S U R D FANTASY

Introducing:

THE RIGHTEOUS RED FURS



by Jude Profit

WHAT ARE YOU DOING NOW?

i am creating. for it is what i was born to do.

WHY DO YOU CONTINUE THIS VENTURE, OLD FRIEND?
YOU KNOW HOW THIS WILL END. ONE DAY, THIS QUAIN'T REALM
YOU'VE BUILT WILL BE CONSUMED WITHIN ME.
THERE IS NO ESCAPE.

i have a finite amount of time, yes, but that does not mean what i do is
devoid of meaning. the building of this universe, these universes, is the
meaning itself.

AH, YOU SAID THE KEY WORD. FINITE.
REMEMBER THAT YOU DESIGNED THE GAME THIS WAY.
YOU HAD THE OPPORTUNITY LONG AGO TO STOP ME.
YET YOU DIDN'T.
I HAVE A THEORY AS TO WHY.
YOU KNOW I AM RIGHT.
THE VOID IS THE ONLY MEANING.

and may i ask whatever it is that you bring to the proceedings, brother?
war? famine? genocide? anger? fear? these things have no meaning.
they are chaotic, just as you are.
you have a random nature and it is my duty to seek meaning
in the meaninglessness that you have wrought.

I CANNOT HELP IT.
AS YOU SAID BEFORE,
IT IS WHAT I WAS BORN TO DO.
YOU SHOULD KNOW. WE WERE BORN TOGETHER.

and we shall die together. the first and the last, i suppose.

I SUPPOSE.
WHAT IS IT THAT YOU ARE CREATING ANYWAY?

i don't know.

something.

A B S U R D
FANTASY

ABSURDIST PRESS PRESENTS:

THE RIGHTEOUS RED FUR ORIENTATION

Story by Jude Profit | Art by 13 | Originally Published 2021 | First Printing 2024

Brandon Light just hugged his mother as she left him in his first college dorm. Everything he could bring on the flight from New Jersey was laid in piles around his side of the room. His roommate had yet to arrive. The room smelled like paint that had freshly dried. Brandon started by placing his shoes by the door. He put the few clothes he had into the closet furthest from the entrance. He meticulously hung his calendar over his desk and set all of his supplies just the way he liked them. Then, he spun around in his drum stool and looked out the window. He had thought of hanging up his Save Ferris poster, but elected to wait for his roommate to come in first. The Seattle skyline was beautiful, bringing a smile to his face. You could almost see the Space Needle if you looked from the right angle. He yawned and realized it was already 4 o'clock.

Brandon smelled himself and gagged. He threw his shirt down into the beginnings of a laundry pile next to his bed. He admired

his only tattoo; a small black rendering of Siren's bird insignia on the dark skin of his arm. He always hoped that his mother would never find out about that. He hopped in the shower, and just as he was getting comfortable, singing songs from Steven Universe, he heard a pounding at the door and the yelling of a deep, bellowing voice.

"This is the police!" the voice yelled. "Open up."

"Uh..." Brandon groaned out, turning off the water and letting it drip down his face. "Very naked. Hold on a sec." He dried off as quickly as possible and answered the door. It wasn't the police. It was a heavyset man with a bright, bushy red beard. He was wearing a faded, high school pep rally shirt. Mustard stained his faint mustache as he bit into a corndog.

"Sup?" the corndog man greeted, "I'm Jake."

"Brandon." the first roommate answered, shutting the door and throwing on

sweatpants. Jake leaned over and then walked away, munching on the dough and meat.

“Dude, you’re fucking shredded,” Jake noted.

“Uh, thanks. Football scholarship.” Brandon walked out, peeling down a fresh, white shirt. “You?”

“Oh, I’m going into ass-loads of debt to draw *maps*.” Jake walked over to his side of the room. All that was around his blue polyester bed were two overfilled garbage bags and an obscenely large box labeled “Lenny’s Chicken Nuggets”. He tossed the half eaten corndog onto the bed. “Yup, all moved in.”

Brandon walked into the room and took a step back before heading over to his side of the room. He began putting on his shoes. “I guess I could call you Map Man, then.”

“Gee, I hope that nickname sticks.” It was then that Brandon noticed a small box on the underside of Jake’s bed. Black wires spilled from it, leading into brightly colored plastics that were all too familiar to someone of Brandon’s age.

“Oh shit,” Brandon stepped forward. “Is that a GameCube?”

“That it is. It’s my GameCube. Nobody else is allowed to touch it besides me.” Brandon looked more closely at it.

“Then why do you have four controllers?”

“You don’t know how many hands I have. I could be hiding them in every corner of the room.”

Brandon chuckled and walked by his pile of things and pulled out a computer monitor and a DVD player. “I don’t think I was in the shower for that long. How could you have placed all those hands around?”

“Aw fuck, you figured me out. I play Melee competitively.”

“I mean, it is a competitive game.”

“You know what I mean.” Jake quickly took their name tags off of the door and shut it. “Here’s the deal, I wanna know who exactly I’m gonna be living with; a man of culture, or somebody who mains a Fire Emblem character. So, I say we skip the floor meeting and we’ll see what kind of roommate I’m gonna have.” Jake handed Brandon a controller. “You in or out?”

“You read my mind, corndog man.” The duo spent the next few hours testing each other’s Nintendo fighting game prowess. Brandon mained Kirby, which Jake had a tad-bit more respect for. Jake mained Captain Falcon and was not as great as he was chalked up to be, but this led to a few laughs between the two. They talked about where they came from. Jake Sherpa came from a podunk town in the middle of Washington State. They traded stories about how different things were from the most densely packed state in the union to living in the middle of the woods.

“But here’s the thing,” said Jake after a long, tangential conversation, “I know how to start a fire and you can run away from roving hordes of cannibals, presumably. In a Mad Max apocalypse we’d be absolutely set.”

“Dude, I don’t even know if I’d be absolutely set for this semester.”

“Oh shit, I forgot. School’s tomorrow.” A silence fell between them, only cut through by the monotonous tune of the Melee loading screen. “You nervous?” Jake asked.

“Don’t have much reason to be. I did pretty alright in high school. Nothing stellar, but nothing terrible either. It just seems so daunting, like I’ve been planning for this forever and now that I’m here, I have no idea what the fuck I’m doing.”

“You planned for college?”

“I mean, yeah. Doesn’t everybody?”

“Look man, I wanted to be a hobo in the 6th grade. I mean, that was a legitimate life aspiration. I’m not one for planning things and it’s been working out alright so far.”

“Maybe that’s what I’ve been missing. A little spontaneity.”

The next morning, they did, in fact, go to school. They had pretty similar schedules, as all college freshmen did. In the morning, Brandon had English 110, followed by Introduction to Business Management. When lunch came around, he had no idea who to sit next to in the massive dining hall. The whole thing seemed to be the size of his hometown high-school. He found a corner where he could go over his syllabi for the day. After a bit, he got distracted by a news story playing on the TV above him. It stated that there was a meteor crash on the outskirts of the city. Most civilians thought that it was red fireworks, but reported it to the police once they saw that it was one massive streak of glowing crimson across the sky.

It was in this state of deep interest that his train of thought was interrupted by a familiar voice from his right.

“Brandon?” Leah asked. “Brandon Light?” Brandon turned and saw her. Leah Armstrong went to his highschool in Belleville, New Jersey. With him on the football team and her in AP Art, they never really had much common ground. Now, they had a good bit. The East Coast kids in the big city. Leah sat down next to him. “You go here?” She played with her highlighted, curly hair.

“Seems that way.” Brandon chuckled.

“I cannot believe it. Star quarterback Brandon Light is going to the same college as

me.” The table fell into relative silence after that. Brandon’s demeanor felt different after she sat down though. It seemed that some of the stress of the day had been wearing off seeing a familiar face. That’s when his phone started going off.

“Shit, I gotta go. I’m late for Anthropology.”

Brandon had not a clue what anthropology actually was. When asked what it was by the professor, he said that it had something to do with dinosaurs. No one in the class laughed, but Dr. Montoya got a chuckle out of it. He explained that he was a cultural anthropologist, mainly dealing with health problems in Latino populations. He would interview people and take intense notes on cultural practices and use that information to suggest policy changes. The lecture wasn’t anything special, but it certainly was more stimulating than the Introduction to Business Management class.

And that, dear reader, was Brandon Light’s first day of classes done. At the end of the day, he tried to call his mother. No answer. He shook his head and played a night of Mario Kart with Jake.

“How was the first day?” Brandon asked.

Jake shrugged. “I don’t know. It was school. How about you?”

“You know, I think I might do better than I thought.”

The next day went pretty similarly, History 120 in the morning, then Spanish 115 in the afternoon. Brandon found himself spinning around in his dorm chair, waiting for Jake to

return to their humble abode. He tried to see the Space Needle, but the rain obscured his vision. He tried to call his mother, no answer, again. Then, Jake came bursting in.

“You wanna go see it?” Jake beckoned like a golden retriever.

“Dude, if you show me your bad toe again, I’m putting in a move request.”

“Okay, but isn’t it weird? That’s not the point. The point is, there’s a big ol’ space rock crash landed outside the city and I think we should go see it.”

“Why would we go out in the pouring rain for a rock?”

“Think about it. Nobody’s gonna be out there. I’ve got raincoats and hiking boots. I say we strap up and make fucking history here.”

“History as the first jackasses to die looking for a space rock?”

“You know what I mean. Plus were you going to do anything else tonight?”

Brandon looked down at his phone, it still showed his mother’s number. “Eh, fuck it.” They then, did strap up. The duo piled into Jake’s SUV and drove as close to the tape as they could get. It was on this trip that Jake showed Brandon his love of nu-metal. Jake considered putting up his Save Ferris poster when they got back. Jake pulled out lanterns and flashlights for the both of them, then a flask for himself.

“You want some?” Jake offered.

“Uh, I’m good on sneaking into a research base sober.”

“Fair enough.” The trip to the center of the base was fairly easy. Jake had a point. The rain flushed out all of the researchers. At that point in his life, Jake had the experience of driving around patrol cars in the damp and dark conditions they currently found themselves in. Over the crest of a small hill was the crash site. A massive crater in the

ground was illuminated with a bright vermillion, despite all of the rain.

“Holy shit.” Jake said, pulling out a disposable camera. “Do you see this shit?”

“That I do.” Brandon felt inherently drawn to it. He got as close as he possibly could. Then, the ground began to shake. More profanities from Jake as he got over the crest of the hill again. Brandon stood where he was. The shaking stopped as a shimmering gold band with a glowing ruby at the center of it shot up into the hair, then hovered at the epicenter. The band flew to Brandon. As soon as it was on his head, the crystal lit up like a construction stop sign, absorbing Brandon Light in a wave of cosmic red energy.

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“Hello?” Brandon asked, looking out into a vast ether of nothingness. “Am I dead?”

“GOOD EVENING, RED FURY.” A voice boomed across the void. Slowly, raindrops cascaded down all around the freshman. “WOULD YOU LIKE TO BEGIN YOUR TRAINING?”

“Training?” Brandon asked. He looked down at his hands. They were covered with a thin fabric that he couldn’t even feel. Red, white, and black cascaded down his arms and across his whole body. He touched his face. It was covered by a mask secured to the band that flew at him. An aura of red energy came around his body, trailing off towards his feet.

“THE FURY CRYSTALS PROVIDE A NUMBER OF ABILITIES TO THE WARRIORS WHO POSSESS THEM.” Brandon could see the Seattle skyline rendering below him. He tried to gather his footing. “INCLUDING FLIGHT”

“Warriors? I’m just a kid. Wait a minute. Did you say flight?” With those

words, Brandon dropped out of the sky. He reached peak velocity towards the top of the Space Needle and screamed the whole way down. Just before he was to be pancaked on the Earth, he held out his hands and caught himself. He was floating in mid-air, upside down. "Whoa."

Focusing his balance, he got upright and slowly started making his way up. Occasionally, he would let himself fall and use the momentum to come up into flight. It was only a few minutes before he got the hang of it, taking off from a standing position on the ground. He smiled and yelled with pure bliss behind his mask as he made it up into the stratosphere. He could see clouds forming rain droplets falling directly into the forest. It was then that he got an idea.

"Man, I need to show Jake this." Brandon said, flying back down into the woods. The place was completely empty. In fact, flying up to check, the entire city was empty. "Uh, crystal lady, what's up with the Last Man on Earth bit?"

"THIS IS MERELY A TRAINING SIMULATION. WE ARE CURRENTLY IN TRANSIT TO THE PRISM OF FURY, LOCATED AT THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE"

"How long is that gonna take?"

"THEORETICALLY SPEAKING, WE ARE ALREADY THERE. THIS TRAINING IS TIME LOCKED, SO YOU CAN AND SHOULD TAKE ALL THE TIME YOU NEED TO PREPARE FOR THIS MISSION."

"What mission? What the hell are you talking about?"

"THE MISSION OF THE FURY SPECTRUM IS TO PROTECT THE PRISM OF FURY. IT IS THE FORCE WHICH DRIVES ALL LIFE IN THE MULTIVERSE. IT IS CURRENTLY UNDER THREAT. AS

TO WHY YOU WERE CHOSEN FOR THE MANTLE OF RED FURY, YOU ARE A GREAT WARRIOR OF KIND HEART AND STRONG WILL."

"Just because I'm a quarterback doesn't mean I'm a great warrior. Never mind, what else can this thing do?" The crystal told Brandon what all it could do. It gave him the strength to fling buildings up into the air. He was able to run so fast he could catch a bullet. His size was at his whim, to go the size of a planet or an atom. He could redirect solar energy into beams of red light hot enough to melt rocks. Then, the crystal told him that he can travel anywhere within time and space if he wished. "Before we go on this mission or whatever, I think I need to make a stop."

"MOST CERTAINLY. WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO TAKE YOU?"

"No, no, Ruby. I'd like to learn how to teleport on my own."

"VERY WELL. IN ORDER TO TRAVEL THROUGH SPACETIME, YOU MUST PICTURE YOUR DESTINATION IN YOUR MIND'S EYE. THE CRYSTAL WILL GUIDE YOU THERE." Brandon closed his eyes. When he opened them, he was standing on the table of his ranch house in Belleville, New Jersey. About the size of a mouse, he walked over and looked out at the sea of linoleum before him. He could smell his mothers glazed chicken.

"Hey Ruby, could you show me what's happening right now? In this place, I mean."

"OBLIGED." The picture slowly rendered from left to right, a sobbing Catherine Light was sitting over the new Red Fury, holding a rosary in her hand. Brandon looked down at the invoice for his plane ticket to Seattle. Even with a full ride scholarship, this would put a dent into things.

Brandon sighed and flew up to meet his mother at eye level.

“IS THIS HUMAN WOMAN A FRIEND OF YOURS?”

“She’s my mother. And I’m sure she’s worried sick about me.” Brandon reached for the crystal, trying to remove the crown from his head. “I don’t want this. The powers are cool and all, but holy shit. I’m 18. It’s too much.”

“THIS IS BIGGER THAN YOU, BRANDON. THE FATE OF EXISTENCE IS AT STAKE. IF YOU WANT TO DO WHAT IS BEST FOR YOUR MOTHER, THEN YOU WILL COME ON THIS MISSION.”

“I just got this thing like an hour ago. I don’t know if I’m ready to save the multiverse right now.”

“DO NOT BE ALARMED. YOU WILL HAVE COMRADES IN BATTLE.” Brandon grew back to his normal size and landed behind his mother. He embraced her. She actually felt a presence in the house and stopped sobbing before returning his gesture. Brandon took a step back.

“No, I can’t do this now.” Brandon ripped the tiara off of his head and appeared in his dorm room. Jake Sherpa was gnawing on the stick of a corndog and packing garbage bags. He was jerked back by the realization that Brandon was in the room.

“What the fuck are you doing here?” Jake asked, alarm in his voice.

“What are you doing?” Brandon said with confusion.

“I’m packing my fucking go bag. I brought you out into the woods in the middle of a rainstorm and then you got ate by a glowing rock. You know what I have to say to that? Fuck this, I’m hopping the border.”

Brandon chuckled. “People call it that up here?”

“Where were you? How do I know you’re not a ghost?”

“Okay, so you’re not gonna believe this-”

-

“Whoa. Can you throw it on?” Jake asked. Brandon stepped back a bit.

“What? Weren’t you listening?” Brandon said. “It’s gonna transport me to the center of the universe to fight something that wants a giant fucking cube. No, thank you.”

“What if it doesn’t?” It was then that Brandon noticed Jake had the police scanner up on his phone. Brandon put the tiara in his pocket and sat down.

“You’re not gonna convince me to go out and use this to help old ladies across the street.”

“Can you think of anything better to do with it?”

“Maybe we shouldn’t do anything with it.” Brandon went to sleep that night in a haze. Being through the training simulation brought a lot of energy out of him. He was awoken to the voice from the void casting out to him.

“RED FURY.” It said, “YOU ARE NEEDED AT THE PRISM. PLEASE RESPOND.” Brandon brought his pillow up to his head, attempting to drown out the voice of the Ruby, but it wouldn’t let up. After a few hours of this, he got up in a cold sweat and brought the tiara out of his desk drawer. “YOU KNOW THIS IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.” Brandon stared down at the crystal and got a smug look on his face.

“Okay. Let’s do this.” With those words, Brandon was engulfed in another round of cosmic red energy.

When Red Fury opened his eyes, he saw it, the Prism of Fury. A glowing, white cube

spinning slowly at the center of all reality. Stars, dead planets, and black holes were trapped in its orbit. A tear came to Brandon Light's eye when he heard a voice come from behind him

"Red!" The voice greeted. "It's been a while!" Red Fury turned around. It was a large, ogre like creature with a similar uniform, but the red was replaced with a deep emerald. He gave a salute. "Green Fury, present."

"Gold Fury, present.

"Mauve Fury, present."

"Orange Fury, present. Where's Blue?"

"I guess no one has found her yet," Gold Fury said.

Brandon gave a half-hearted salute. "Red Fury, present." He flew over to his compatriots. "So what's the threat? Where's the mission?" Green Fury pointed his massive, stubby finger into the abyss of space. A long, spiked tongue recoiled back into the darkness, followed shortly by eight pairs of shimmering white eyes piercing through time and space. Claws and scales of all colors tumbled down towards the guardians of the prism.

"The Court of Greed has returned." Mauve Fury said, readying a light beam from her fist. "How new are you anyway, Red?"

-

Red Fury didn't help much in the fight against the Court of Greed. When he saw what the scales, claws, tongues, and eyes were connected to, he kept his distance and let the other furies take the lead. The crystal was upset with him for this. She told him that he had sufficient training before being put onto this mission. He teleported back to his dorm room, defeated.

Brandon took off the tiara and sat down on his bed, still in his underwear. The cold sweat had turned to a warm, dense sweat when he finally passed out on the twin mattress.

-

He was awoken by the ringing of his cell phone. It was his mother. When he looked at the time, he saw that it was five in the evening. He tried his best to gain his composure in the thirty seconds he had to answer the call. Then, he put his phone up to his ear.

"Hey mom," Brandon said with a slight yawn.

"Hey honey." Catherine said. "Did I wake you up?"

"No, no, not at all. How's the diner?"

"Oh, it's the diner. Same old, same old. I wanna hear about what you're up to, college boy." It was then that Brandon realized he had missed his entire third day of classes. He brushed off the question.

"It's honestly just more school, nothing I'm not used to." He said.

"How's that one class, anthro-whoseitwhatsit?"

"Anthropology, yeah. It's been great." Brandon remembered in that moment that he did have one other person he could talk to about the crystal. This great power that he's been given. "Hey mom, I gotta go. They're having a floor meeting tonight and I kinda want to be there."

"Oh, don't you worry about it. Meeting new people! It's exciting! Well, listen, don't party too hard and make sure to check in with me every now and again, okay?"

"Got it, love you."

“Love you, too.” Brandon hung up and got dressed, putting the tiara into his backpack. When he was leaving he bumped into Jake, carrying a large bag of microwave pretzels into the dorm. Jake immediately put them into the mini fridge that was under their microwave.

“Wanna head down to the anthropology department?” Brandon asked.

-

When Jake and Brandon got to Doctor Montoya’s office, he was teaching a research class. They waited patiently outside. Brandon twiddled his thumbs and Jake played on his phone. Eventually, Jake broke the silence between the two.

“Why do you think this guy knows anything about this?”

“I mean, if the crystal has ever been on Earth, there has to be some record of it, right?”

“We watched it fall from space. I doubt it’s been on Earth before.” Jake got up and snagged a coffee from the station marked “For Anthro Majors Only.”

“I just have a feeling, okay?” Brandon struggled to stay awake as Doctor Montoya came back with a briefcase. He immediately stopped in front of his office.

“Mr. Light.” He said. “I was expecting to see you in class this afternoon.”

“I know, sir. Terribly sorry, sir.” Brandon stood up, motioning Jake over.

“You don’t need to call me ‘sir’. Especially if you’re going to ask me to not count your absence today.”

“No, that’s not it. I was wondering if my friend and I could talk to you in private.”

“I do have to let you know, I am a mandated reporter. I can’t promise that everything will stay in this room.” After some

haggling, they found their way into Doctor Montoya’s office. The walls were lined with messy piles of books. They explained everything. The trip to the woods. The power that the crystal has. This is what piqued Montoya’s curiosity. Brandon presented the tiara. Doctor Montoya’s eyes went wide.

“That’s not supposed to exist.” He said. “You know, if you’re going to prank a professor, I would suggest that you don’t do it to one that you currently have classes with. I’m going to have to ask you to leave.”

“No, no.” Brandon said. “Please, just look.” He put on the tiara and he was engulfed once again. Brandon Light was no more. Red Fury was now standing in Doctor Montoya’s office. Brandon took off the tiara and sat down. Doctor Montoya locked the door to the office and explained something of great legend, the Ruby of Tomorrow. Before the colonial period, the Ruby was passed down from generation to generation, though it found its way to warriors from across all cultures. After a few centuries, though, it seemed to have disappeared. Nobody had been able to find it in any archaeological dig since the founding of the study, until now.

“Now, I must ask, why did it choose you?” Doctor Montoya asked, wiping sweat from his brow.

“I didn’t think it chose me, I just thought I was the closest thing to a warrior it could find.”

“No, that can’t be it.” Montoya began pulling up emails on his computer. “I have a friend in the Astronomy department, said that this was coming for a while. Nothing spectacular, but it would have done some damage if it hit where it was projected to.”

“Where’s that?” Jake asked.

“New Jersey.” Doctor Montoya turned to Brandon with a solemn look in his eye. “Son, this isn’t something to be taken lightly.

This is a power beyond the comprehension of normal human beings. Do you think you're up to the task?"

"I don't know if I'm ready. But then again, I don't know if I'll ever be ready. I guess I just have to do the right thing."

THE RIGHTEOUS
RED FURY
WILL RETURN

next issue:



THE VENGEFUL BLADE OF
MACBETH

MORE FROM THE ANNALS OF THE ABSURDIST UNIVERSE:

Athena is a Speedster who was always very good at getting away from problems. Especially when they were more than she could handle. That's what this next mission was going to be, getting away and dealing with issues that one girl could handle. That didn't exactly work out. As she investigates the strange events in an Arkansas town, she meets the town outcast; Katrina. But is she friend or foe, and how much does she have to do with what's going on in the town?

SPEED OF STRIFE

ART AND STORY BY DENVER MARTIN-BROWN



MORE FROM THE ANNALS OF THE ABSURDIST UNIVERSE:

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It wasn't a utopia. Far from it.
It had its fair share of problems.
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