

Six Beer Cans (Donnie Stories)

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Everyday life

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There are six beer cans on the table. Two are full and four are empty, and one of the empties has been used as an ashtray. The Mexican is sitting to my right and heâs pretty far gone. Weâve been drinking since the sun came up and itâs gone down twice since. I take a look at the table. I pick up one full can and I put it next to the Mexican. Then I push the four empties to one side, and then I take the second full can, and I put it down next to me.

â Hey Mexican, make sure you donât drink from the wrong can, man.â

And the game goes on as the crowd roars and the players run up and down a green and white pitch in black and white socks. The clock ticks and the dying cock crows, and the phone rings but nobody answers it. The Mexican jumps from his seat and runs to the kitchenette on the other side of the room. He doubles up over the sink and heâs coughing and spitting, and it's all like a bad movie. Then he produces a burnt out cigarette butt from under his tongue and he presents it to me as if it were a Oscar.

â What the fuck is this, man?â He asks.

I lean forward and focus hard.

â Thatâs a dog-end, ha, ha, ha.â

â Hey, man, no shit itâs a dog-end. What the fuck, man?

â Ha, ha, ha, why are you eating dog-ends, chap?â

â No, man. This was in the beer, man. I took a drink, man.â

â Ha, ha, ha, why did you do that?â

â Hey, man, come on, man.â

â Come on what?â

â Why are you putting shit in the can, man?â

And heâs standing up straight and heâs serious like cancer, and his eyes are waiting for an answer.

â Hey I told you, donât drink from the wrong can.â

And he looks upset and he looks confused but to me it's all too straight forward.

â What I donât understand, man, is why you have to use the can when there is an ashtray right there, man.â

This is pissing me off.

â Hey, Chavez, you listen to me, you donkey-fucking prick. You donât have to understand anything. All you have to do is listen. I told you not to drink from the wrong fucking can. I even moved the empty cans so that you wouldnât get confused. I couldnât have made it any fucking clearer if I had written it down. If someone tells you there is a cliff edge next to you, and then you fall over it. God forbid you live. You donât run back up the hill and say â hey, man, why is the cliff there?â it just fucking is, and you were told that. Now when I told you not to drink from the wrong can, I freed myself of any responsibility over any potential situation or particular incident, which may occur, if you failed to take my advice. Which you did. Now I promise you one thing, my border-hopping friend, and I give you my solemn word on this. If you continue with both your current tone and your threatening body language, right now, I will, without hesitation, break your fucking head all over this room. Doubt me at your peril!â

He lifts both of his arms and he smiles and it's,

â Hey, Donnie, it's nothing, man. Relax itâs nothing, man.â

And it's never anything, all through the years. Before me, for as long as I can remember, there have been children to boys to girls to women to men, to freaks and monsters and cats and dogs, and it's never anything. Size is home to only one thing, fear. The smaller the king the bigger the castle. They donât sell anything that you couldnât get at a yard sale for a cheaper price. They donât bury their dead and they donât chew before they swallow. Sometimes they fly and sometimes they slither, and they all make so, so much noise. But it's never anything, no matter what.

So why make something out of something that wasnât ever anything to begin with? Why run against the river when you know that, at some point, youâll fall asleep, and youâll wake up back where you started?

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Instead you go with it and sometimes you even kick it off. You kick it off and you ride the thing all the way to Easy Street.

So to all six cans and the stupid Mexican, when I die, Iâ ll give fifty Euros and my mothers soul, and until then I will live with one and all. I will not try to change them and they should not try to change me. And we will live together and I will know that all people are different, and some people are just plain stupid.

â Hey, did you just spit in my sink?â

â You are one angry mother fucker, Donnie.â

â Ha, ha, ha, stupid fucking Mexican!â

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