

Modern Teleology

by Oliver Hunt

Cy stayed in the park after soccer practice and stuffed acorns into his coat pockets. During practice, something about the acorns-scattered randomly around the oaks in the park- distracted him. Something always did. Every practice Coach Fishbaum yelled at him, saying Wake up, son! You're wide open! What are you doing? Where in your head do you go, boy? His teammates would say God, what a retard! Why do we have to play with him? The team would be so much better without him! We might actually win games, but no, we have to have Rain Man Space Cadet Drooling Idiot Mongoloid Cy on our team! Then Fishbaum would say That's enough guys, you just worry about your own playing, let me take care of player discipline, alright?

Holding an acorn between his fingers, Cy noted the shell's symmetry and sheen, the latticework on top. He wondered how he'd never noticed it before. He knew the oaks- standing tall and interlocking their branches over him- started in that tiny package. There was something perfect about it, something he had to take with him, something he had to explore in greater detail away from everybody else.

Coach Fishbaum took Cy aside and said Look son, I don't like humiliating you in front of your teammates. I don't want to kick you off the team because, really, if you just applied yourself that little bit you'd be promising. You have got to get your head in the game. This is a sport, you know. You have to interact with your teammates here. We'll all have a better time if you just focus a little, including you. I'm not your enemy and neither are your teammates, but we can't sugarcoat it when you have your head in the clouds, son.

At home Cy took out a little felt-tip pen and drew faces on a few of the acorns. He drew little curly moustaches on some and thick, sensuous lips on a few others. He had them speak to each other in French. Ah oui oui, the mustachioed ones said. Cy will plant ze acorn and grow big for-*ay*. Ah oui oui, the one with the lips said. Ee weel

take over ze world. Cy thought maybe he could be a mad scientist. He could grow his own forest somewhere, all the plants and animals in the forest could do his bidding. He could run away and live in it, build himself a cabin in the trees, forage, never have to go to stupid soccer practice with Coach Fishbaum or his dickhead teammates again. Cy drew more faces on more acorns. They all had little conversations in French, all about Cy and how awesome he was. He stuffed his French friends back in his pocket with the rest of the acorns and went to bed. He thought about his private forest and his world takeover plans. He could hardly wait for the next day.

Last practice, when Cy's mom came to pick him up, Coach Fishbaum leaned into her driver's side window and said Look, I think Cy's a good kid. I think he has potential to be a good player, but I can't really help him reach it alone. Maybe you and I can talk about it sometime, maybe over a beer or something. If you're up for it. His mom grinned, looked away from Fishbaum, nodded and said I'll keep it in mind. When she drove away, she told Cy to Please try to concentrate. Please. I don't like conversations like the one I just had, okay? They make me really uncomfortable.

Cy woke up and threw his coat on. He ran out and rode his bike back to the park. He found a clearing he could plant his first few acorns, and excitedly shoved his hands into his pockets. Instead of acorns he felt something slimy wriggling around, and pulled out fistfuls of little white worms. He threw them on the ground and threw his coat off. He dug and scraped all the worms out of his pockets and watched as they hit the dirt in writhing blobby white clusters. He decided he hated the French.

