

Comic World

#101



BY LEON WANG

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Written by

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Based on, If Any

Address
Phone Number

INT. DREAMLAND MEDIA COMPANY OFFICE - DAY

The dense fog outside suffuses the sky as always, covering the sunshine from everyone in this city. Although it is still daylight, the dim, white light from a few incandescent bulbs on the grey ceiling is lit already.

WADE, a skinny, brown color, about 35 years old man who just came out from the toilet, is now pushing his yellow janitorial cart across the office, surrounded by the typing sound echoing throughout whole room. Some white-collar managers are discussing about the new interview cooperation with some celebrities and preparation of publishing magazines for next week.

He bows his head all the time and quickens his pace, like a kid scared by such a hurly-burly place.

EXT. DREAMLAND MEDIA COMPANY - DUSK

The staff members of the company gradually come out from the front door of company. Some of them walk in groups while others choose to enjoy the time staying individually. What can be found on their face is only the sign of tiredness, with a little bit of relieving features, but no smile.

Wade looks just like one of them, except his sign of tiredness is much more intense, and the thing he holds is not a suitcase, but a toilet paper roll.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

--Wade enters a nameless bakery near Brooklyn Street, grabs a bags of Hot Dog Buns that seems already not fresh on the cashier's table, then fishes out some stained coins, reaches out his emaciated arms and gives them to the cashier.

--The traffic light of St.Louis Crossroad turns green. While walking, Wade secretly takes out a bun from the bag with his left hand, and his right hand is hardly stuffing the remaining buns into his pants' pocket, since he fears they'll be discovered by the beggars aside the road.

--Wade walks through the entrance of his shabby, old apartment then enters into his dark room. He takes off his uniform, and throws it on the top of the locker, beside an unopened envelope with some words "Diagnosis of Depression and Anemia" on it.

--The clock hanging on the wall shows it is 5:07 pm for now. Smile can finally be discovered on his face, he grabs a pen from the table and leans beside the window. Orange light from the street lamp shines into the room.

By the melodic blues song coming from the saxophone played by the resident upstairs, Wade holds one end of the toilet paper with right hand and rolls it with left hand until it becomes 20 inches long. Then, he waves his pen, beginning to draw some delicate comic characters, a strong man with white beard now happily fishing with a young boy, on his opened toilet paper roll.

END MONTAGE

INT. DREAMLAND MEDIA COMPANY OFFICE- A WEEK LATER, 11:25AM

Today should be another working day in Dreamland as always, dense fog outside, dim light overhead. However, today is much different from the ordinary day, the typing sound has been replaced by the noisy voice from everyone. Chatting, murmuring and loud talking make the office today be more vibrant than any time.

Wade leans on the wall, beside the water dispenser. It is the first time he does not bow down and only focus on his cleaning work, instead, he confusingly stares at the unfamiliar scene happening in front of him: it is the first time he sees those wealthy company managers, who wear expensive white suits, accompanying with their children, many staff members hurriedly running back and forth, some of which wearing glasses gathering beside those managers, saying about something like "interview", "be careful".

But the most unusual thing Wade discover, is that smile appear on people's face.

Wade decides to summon his courage and ask a STAFF MEMBER, who just pass him to pick a cup of water, about what happened.

WADE
(adjusts his cloth)
Hey sir..May I ask what
ha..happening today?

That staff member glances at him for a second, then begins to drink the water.

Wade sense an uncomfortable feeling of awkwardness. He habitually bows his head down again.

STAFF MEMBER
(throws paper cup into the
bin)
Eh..Do you know that famous
cartoonist GELLAR FILS-AIME right?

Hearing this name, Wade instantly raises his head up and gazes at the staff member with delight, making his hair on his neck prickle.

WADE

(strongly nods head)
Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah! I know him! He is the one celebrated as th..the..the most talented cartoonist of this century, do you read his..

STAFF MEMBER

(interrupts)
..Glad you love him, our company has an interview for this guy today. He'll be there in few minutes.

Staff member goes back to work, leaving Wade who seems completely shocked by this breaking news.

INT. WADE'S ROOM (CHILDHOOD) - 27 YEARS AGO

Wade's room is too small, only large enough to fit two people. Few comic posters on the wall can not cover the tattered wallpaper. The stains on the fractured window block some light outside.

WADE'S FATHER(53), with a heavy smell of alcohol, is now looking down at his son who curls up.

WADE'S FATHER

Gives me the money.

Wade trembles, but not saying anything.

WADE'S FATHER (CONT'D)

(yells and kicks Wade violently)

ARE YOU FUCKING DEAF!? WHERE'S THE MONEY!?!?

The harsh pain makes Wade crying.

WADE

(crying)
M..my mother wants me to use that money to buy a birthday gift..

A loud sound of slapping face echoes throughout the room.

WADE'S FATHER

Don't you ever call that bitch your mother again! She abandoned us to live with that pretty boy! Anyway, I ask you one last time, where's the money she gives you?

WADE

(desperately shout)

..I already spend them!..okay..

The room sinks into a deadly silence, except the sobbing sound from Wade.

WADE'S FATHER

Fuck...

He walks out the room and heavily slams the door, making Wade gives a violent shudder.

After hearing the footstep getting further, Wade crawls to the side of the bed, and pulls out a comic book that is under the bed.

He looks at the title of the cover: "Gellar's Comic World #13 - Wish My Comic Brings Joy to Everyone!". Smile appears on his swollen face.

INT. DREAMLAND MEDIA COMPANY OFFICE - 11:29AM

Now, Wade is smiling like he did as a kid, his skinny body trembling because of the excitement. He's now standing at an unnoticeable corner, but very close to the glass door, where the hero he worships will walk through.

A STAFF MEMBER in black suit standing near the door looks at his watch for few seconds, then clear his throat.

STAFF MEMBER 2

Ladies and gentlemen...

Wade holds his work, the toilet paper roll he draws comics on it more tightly than ever.

STAFF MEMBER 2 (CONT'D)

Let's welcome...

Drops of perspiration roll down from his forehead,.

STAFF MEMBER 2 (CONT'D)

(opens the door)

The Legendary cartoonist Gellar
Fils-Aimé!

Wearing his classic glasses with white frame, Gellar Fils-Aimé(45) in suit of khaki color and a magenta tie appears with a face expressing joyfullness as he always did.

Yes, that's him, Wade gazes at him soulfully. For this moment, he can't hear the burst of cheer and applause from the public, the time is just like being frozen.

He takes a step forward and reaches out the toilet paper he holds, thinking about showing his work to him, but instantly this wonderful moment collapses, replaced by a sudden, apocalyptic vertigo.

WADE
(painfully holds his head with
right hand,murmuring)
Oh..not now.

He shakes his head and seems recovered a little bit, but when he raises his head again, the figure of Geller is drowned in the crowded people.

STAFF MEMBER 3 (O.S.)
Hey! Get out of my way!

STAFF MEMBER 4 (O.S.)
..Excuse me..Dude, watch out!

Hearing the sound, Wade looks back and has no time to avoid what's going to happen to him: another group of people comes from behind and pushes Wade into the crowd like a flood.

Now Wade hears everything, hearty laughter from Geller far beyond, screaming, talking from countless people, and yelling from security staff...the world turns more and more chaotic every second.

So is his mind.

Pushing by all those people, plus his unconscious head, Wade can't control the balance of his body anymore.

With another striking push from behind, his toilet paper work falls off from his left hand and rolls on the ground.

Sensing the loss of weight from his left hand, Wade realizes the horrible facts that his precious work disappears. He recovers some consciousness and urgently tries to bow his body down to seek his most precious thing. However, the crowd doesn't leave any space for poor Wade, a ham sandwiched by bread, not alone that, after being kicked by random people for multiple times, his toilet paper already rolls out from the crowd and stops at another corner of the office.

While Wade still struggles, wanting to get out from crowd, there's another CLEANER who doesn't care about this cartoonist at all, is focusing on cleaning every part of the floor.

Now, he stops at the last corner he hasn't cleaned, confusingly stares at the toilet paper on the ground.

CLEANER
(scratches his head)
Which genius put the toilet paper
over there?

He bends down, picks the toilet paper up and puts it beside his janitorial cart with other new toilet papers, then leaves the office.

INT. DREAMLAND MEDIA COMPANY - LATER

As crowds move with Geller to another room, there's finally some space for Wade to leave the crowds.

WADE
(exhaustedly)
Ah...eh..Excuse me..please..Ah!

Wade struggles and eventually gets out from hell. He stands at the middle of the office, blankly looking around the vast place with no one else.

He turns around, scanning every part of this room, hoping to find his toilet paper work, but his terrified face already tells that he fails to find what he wants.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

--Wade hastily travels everywhere in the office to check if his work falls into some area he can't see. He detects every corner. Getting on the ground to see if his toilet paper is under someone's table, but eventually he finds nothing. Stands beside the last table he searched, Wade raises his head and sighs for a second.

--Wade is now in the daily trash-collecting room, ignoring the dirtiness and the stinky smell. He just keeps rummaging within those garbage cans. Although sweat souses him all over, he still finds nothing. Wade closes his eyes and leans backward, slightly shaking his head.

--Wade knocks the door of monitor room and the personnel on duty responds. By the second she opens the door, the intolerant odor from Wade makes her frown. She heavily slams the door, like Wade's father did.

Wade opens his mouth, seems he still wants to say something or even yell, but eventually no words come out, but only the sound of a continuous cough.

END MONTAGE.

INT. TOILET BESIDE OFFICE - BY THE SAME TIME

The toilet gray partitions and white ceiling looks nice and neat after cleaning in the morning.

GELLAR
(sneezes)
ACHOO!

During the break, sitting on the toilet, Gellar suddenly sneezes loudly while reading another interview plan offered by the Dreamland media company in the future.

GELLAR (CONT'D)
This city is still cold as always..

He reaches his right hand, takes a part of the toilet paper besides.

GELLAR (CONT'D)
(sniffles and continues
reading)
..more advertising? Boring..the
future of the comic industry..Well,
that's a really important issue.

Gellar puts the plan file aside, then unfolds the paper, wanting to blow his nose.

At this moment, an expression of confusion appears on his face.

GELLAR (CONT'D)
(frowns and squints,
stares at the paper)
What the..

Gellar's sight then turns to the toilet paper beside. He carefully takes it down and gradually opens it.

GELLAR (CONT'D)
Oh god.

With the disappearance of the frown on his face, his confusion turns into an expression of surprise, and such surprise transforms into admiration and ultimate exhilaration on his face while he opens more parts of the toilet paper, which no one has ever seen Gellar like that before.

INT. DREAMLAND COMPANY OFFICE - LATER

Gellar hurriedly enters the office in strides and directly walks toward the MAIN MANAGER of Dreamland media company, who's now discussing with his crews about an interview for another famous guy.

MAIN MANAGER

..Sends the tape of the last session to the editing department..Hey you, tell the cameraman to adjust his equipment. The next interview will start after an hour, okay?

He turns around, just to see Gellar comes to him. He happily steps toward Gellar.

MAIN MANAGER (CONT'D)

(smiling)

Oh Mr.Gellar, so glad you can come for our interview today. It is an absolute honor for our company, and sir, now I want to introduce a person...

Gellar politely interrupts his words.

GELLAR

It is also an honor for me, dear manager. Thanks for your passionate invitation to let me have a chance to share my experiences in the comic industry to other cartoonists through this interview, and please allow me to say something..

Gellar holds up the toilet paper he finds.

GELLAR (CONT'D)

I need to find out this toilet paper belongs to who immediately. Can you help me contact with the managers of related departments..

MAIN MANAGER
 (chuckles and interrupts
 Gellar)
 Ha..Mr.Gellar, seriously? Is this
 some kind of magical toilet paper
 used by a sorcerer?

GELLAR
 Manager...

MAIN MANAGER
 Mr.Gellar, please listen to me.
 I want to introduce my nephew
 to you. He says he's talented
 on drawing, and brings his work
 today to seek some advice from
 you.

MAIN MANAGER (CONT'D)
 (leans forward and
 whispers)
 You know, that lazy kid learns
 nothing from college and can't find
 a job now. If you can do this favor
 for me, I promise you'll get more
 remuneration later, thank you so
 much.

Before Gellar wants to say something more, the manager's
 NEPHEW(22), who wears an ill-fitting blue hoodie, appears
 behind the main manager and nervously walks toward Gellar
 now. He reaches out his right hand, wanting to make a
 handshake with this comic master.

Gellar slightly sighs, but still politely smiles and reaches
 out.

However, perhaps because of the nervousness, or perhaps the
 ground is too slippery after cleaning, nephew suddenly slips
 and can't control his balance. The sketchbook held by his
 left hand falls on the ground, he hastily steps on it and
 eventually steadies himself.

Instead of picking up his comic work, the first thing nephew
 does after restoring the balance is still reached out a hand
 to Geller, with an awkward smile.

But Gellar pulls his hand back.

While his smile is replaced by a frowning face, Gellar stares
 at the sketchbook that's still on the ground and ignored by
 his creator, then sighs and passes by that young man without
 giving him a look. He then walks to the side of the main
 manager.

GELLAR

(Coldly)

I've got nothing to say for him, manager. Now, considering our future interview cooperation, can you do me a favor to find who owns this toilet paper?

MAIN MANAGER

(stutters at first, nodes)

Ah..ah..okay. The sanitation officer should know something about it..this way.

EXT. A ROAD BESIDE WADE'S APARTMENT- SIMULTANEOUSLY

Wade, not just looks like a walking dead man, but also smells like a zombie. Every passer-by shows their undisguised de testation on him and quickens their pace to stay away from him. Even those beggars also can't tolerate him, hold their noses and move aside.

Wade doesn't pay any attention of their insulting behaviors on him, actually, he can't sense or react to anything now. Base on his condition, seems he may not even recall how he leaves the company and nearly gets home.

While he wanders toward his apartment, a person sits near the entrance makes him retrieving some consciousness.

A BLIND MAN, wearing dark glasses, is now holding an old saxophone with countless scratches on it. His shoulder bag droops on the wall at his left side like a wilting papaya.

Hearing the sound of closing steps, he turns his head to Wade's direction.

BLIND MAN

What'up, buddy?

WADE

Sir, why you are sitting outside?

BLIND MAN

(gives a wry smile)

Well, things just don't go well for poor people like you and me, right?

Wade remains in silence.

BLIND MAN (CONT'D)
 ...The landlord of this department
 sells it to a real estate
 developer, who's going to turn it
 into an office building. All of us
 have been kicked out now.

Wade still remains in silence.

BLIND MAN (CONT'D)
 (sighs)
 Buddy, I suggest you to pack your
 stuff, before those son of a
 bitches throw them out.

Wade nods his head and walks toward the entrance.

Before he enters in, he finally says something.

WADE
 Thanks for your blues playing, sir.

BLIND MAN
 Glad you enjoy it, that's the only
 thing that supports my life.

A wry smile appears on Wade's face, he walks in and fades
 into the darkness.

EXT. DREAMLAND MEDIA COMPANY - LATER

At the front door of the company, holding the toilet paper
 and a note with Wade's address on it, Gellar says goodbye to
 the manager of the monitor room and the cleaner who picked
 the toilet paper this morning. He rushes to his personal
 DRIVER, who already opens the car door for him.

While he gets into the car, a loud cheering sound burst out
 from his mouth.

GELLAR
 (exhilaratingly)
 Woo! Finally! I finally find a
 genius that can save this industry!
 2816 Westin Road, Gail Apartment,
 Room 101. Let's go!

Looking at Gellar through the rear-view mirror, a smile also
 appears on the driver's face full of beard. Then, by the roar
 of engine and laugh from the back seat. The car speeds away
 from Dreamland Company.

INT. WADE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Wade sits at the corner, still like a dead man. Seems he is staring at the mess in front of him, but the only things can be discovered behind his eyes are just emptiness and loneliness.

Almost nothing in this room is still complete. That unopened envelope is already being torn into many small pieces, which now scatter on the ground with the glass fragments and broken dishes. The only pen Wade had for drawing comics still remains complete, and it lies beside the fractured table legs.

The box, showing that Wade was collecting his stuff at first, has been violently thrown and crushed on the other side of the room. Sundries like a bundle of twine and few batteries, some stained clothes and small bottles spread out on the floor.

Wade still looks at the front, but he eventually moves a little bit, his left hand groping a bun on the ground, which is the last one he purchased a week ago.

Without giving the look at how stale the bun is, he puts it into his mouth. Now the "dead body" finally gains some energy. The emptiness in his eyes disappear a little bit when his pupils recovered from dilation.

Now it is available to track his sight, to see what he really looks at...

..And the answer is that bundle of twine.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Within the car, Gellar leans forward from the back with an astonishing expression.

GELLAR

An hour?

Monday, obviously, Brooklyn Street is chock-a-block(with cars). Gellar's car is now stuck in such diabolical traffic, and cannot move at all.

DRIVER

Yes, Mr.Gellar, I'm afraid the time we arrive at the destination will be an hour later if traffics are not recovered..

GELLAR
Do you think it can be recovered?

DRIVAR
Nope.

GELLAR
(facepalm)
..An hour.. 3 minutes ago you just
said it only takes 7 minutes..

Gellar sits back and looks out through the window, the street is still jammed with countless cars and has no signs of recovering, just like what driver said.

He ponders for a second, and leans forward again.

GELLAR (CONT'D)
Hey Tom, how long does it take in
walking?

DRIVER TOM
About 15 minutes.

GELLAR
Alright then, tell me the path.

DRIVER TOM
Ok sir, you need to walk along the
street till that nameless bakery,
then turn right...

BEGIN MONTAGE:

--Gellar grabs the toilet paper with right hand and runs along the street under the rare sunshine of this city. He tries to be fast all the time but there's a lot of pedestrians on the streets who block his way, especially his passionate fans who ask him for a signature or having a picture together. Gellar keeps saying "excuse me" and "sorry, next time" and bypassing them as quick as he can.

--Wade now stands under the thick beam of his room. The twine twists around his right hand. He raises his head with an expressionless face.

--The traffic light of St.Louis Crossroad turns green, but Gellar does not pass the road immediately. He bends down and holds the wall, heavily panting. Sweat drips down from his forehead. After a few seconds, he straightens up and runs through the road.

--Wade stretches the twine and holds the middle part with left hand while the remaining part is still twisted around his right hand. He waves it in an upward direction, but the rope fails to hang on the beam and falls for the first attempt.

--Gellar runs into an alley between two old apartment buildings consisting of reddish-brown bricks, his white shoes get stained while he steps in puddles. The polluted steam around this area causes him to cough, but Gellar doesn't stop.

--He turns right after getting out of the alley. Then, he slows down a little bit, squinting to check the name of every apartment along this street, since the signboards of the apartments in this area are too old and incomplete, hard for him to distinguish.

--Wade waves the twine again. It hangs on the beam for this time. He then holds the two ends and begins to tie the knots.

--The clock on the wall is ticking.

--Gellar still anxiously checks the names, but the only word now can be heard from his mouth is "no", "no" and "no".

--A perfect loop has been successfully tied. Staring at it for a second, Wade then walks to the side of the room and picks up a stool that seems still intact. He walks back and places it under the rope

--The clock on the wall is ticking.

--Gellar suddenly stops in front of a shabby apartment. His eyes widened after seeing its name. This is Gail Apartment.

--The clock on the wall is ticking.

--Wade tremblingly steps on the stool. His two hands hold the loop. He bends down. An extremely painful expression eventually appears on his face.

--Gellar enters the apartment. Discovering the door is ajar and the glass fragments on the ground. He hastily dashes toward Room 101.

END MONTAGE.

INT. WADE'S ROOM - 2PM

Gellar slowly walks forward. The sound of stepping on the glass pieces echoes throughout the room. He astonishingly stares at the front.

GELLAR
(frustratedly)
How could..Wh..What happened..

He looks at the toilet paper roll he holds with right hand,
then deeply sighs.

The room falls into a temporary silence.

WADE (O.S.)
Ehh..fuck..

A husky voice suddenly comes behind Gellar, follows by the
sound of a toilet flush. Gellar surprisingly turns around,
seeing Wade stumbles out from the bathroom, bending down, and
holding his stomach with a painful expression on his face.

WADE (CONT'D)
(weakly)
Fuck that bun..I shouldn't..

The husky voice stops when Wade sees what Gellar holds. His
cheeks and mouth twisted intensively. A burst of tears comes
out, but there's no crying voice.

Without having a look at Gellar, Wade walks toward him,
tremblingly reaches out, takes the toilet paper and holds it
back in his arms. At this moment, Wade is just like losing
all strength and going to slump on the ground that full of
sharp fragments.

But Gellar lifts him up, his eyes are now also filled with
tears.

He hugs Wade, now the crying voice eventually echoes
throughout the room.

Sunlight passes through the window, shining on those two
cartoonists.

END

