

What in the World

by Hilary Schwartz

God is at his desk. He calls out to his assistant.

God

Dick! I'm ready for you.

Dick enters with a pen and pad.

Dick

God, sir, can you call me Richard? You know how you gave me omniscience as your assistant? I've looked into the future. And the nickname Dick will become embarrassing.

God

Oh no, I love Dick. These human beings I'm creating screw up everything.

God looks at the screen of his Dell desktop.

Dick

God, are you busy with something? I can come back.

God

I'm just checking out that internet thing that's coming in the future.

Dick

You're looking at porn, aren't you?

God quickly turns away from the screen.

God

No! I'm, uh, reading articles in, uh, *The New Yorker*. So what's on the agenda?

Dick

Well, we have seven days to create the world. Let me read the plans we have so far. There will be all kinds of living beings. Ideas for animals include insects, rodents, mammals, which includes humans. Oh and you specifically requested pandas. These living beings need to eat and reproduce. I'm sure that porn you were not watching gave you some ideas.

Dick looks to the back of the page to see if there's anything else.

Dick

That's all we have so far. Let's start with how they eat.

God

Here's what I'm envisioning. A strong animal mows down a more vulnerable, petrified one. The strong animal bites the other's neck, snuffing the life out of it, at which point the strong devours the weak's raw, bloody flesh.

Dick stares at God, disbelieving.

Dick

Seriously? Are you high?

God

Don't stop me. I'm on a roll. Of course animals need to protect themselves. Say one of these insects we've talked about shoots out acid onto another and melts its limbs. Ooh. And how about, right after mating, the female insect bites off the head of the male and eats it. What do you think?

Dick

I am saying this because I am the only one in the universe who can be honest with you. You sound like a psychopath. Are we still going with you're a benevolent God? Because if this is the good God, I'd hate to see the bad one.

God

Dick, this is my universe and you're just living in it. Keep writing this down. Now food can't just sit there in their bodies. It has to come out. How about they excrete this brown putrid substance out of a hole in their asses. And in between, that same hole emits horrific-smelling gas. And make sure this hole is right next to their reproductive organs. The humans will say you don't shit where you eat. I'll show them.

Dick

Sir, are you feeling well? I'm saying this as a friend: you need help. Do you want to talk to someone? Are you taking your medication?

God

These are some of the best ideas I've ever had.

Dick

Coke. You're on cocaine again. You are grinding your teeth.

God

Don't worry. I took it with pot edibles. That balances me out.

Dick

It's just that this world you are describing sounds like a horror movie. It sounds like it's coming from the minds behind "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre."

God
I love that movie.

Dick
And you still want people to worship you? You, who created *this* world?

God
Yes.

Dick
And pray to you for good things to happen?

God
Yes.

Dick looks around.

God
What are you doing?

Dick
I'm just making sure I walked into God's office and not Satan's.

God
That's a low blow, Dick.

Dick
You know, God, I think you're brilliant. But I have experienced what you're going through now. I have gotten really high and written down all these ideas that I think are genius. Then, in the morning when I read them, they sound like the ramblings from a psychotic breakdown. That is the feeling you are going to have you when you wake up tomorrow.

God
Do I have to get Jesus on this? Because, Dick, you are expendable.

Dick
I'm worried about you. You don't sound well. Can I get you some herbal tea?

God
Dick.

Dick
Richard.

God
Dick, get it done!

Dick gets up and slogs toward the door.

Dick

I hate my job.

God

What did you say?

Dick

Nothing.