



CREATION

BY ALAN JOHN

Creation

It has been suggested by many and so I once believed that man came from something hairier than man and that these creatures were once lizards or fish and before that something very simple living in the deep blue sea.

Where *that* thing first came from I have no idea.

But I have recently learned something startling that does not invalidate this theory but makes it a bit more complicated. And what I have learned is that, millions of years ago, there was a man named Nick and he had a computer and he drove a car and he had a girlfriend.

Nick worked at a bank and he did not particularly like it. But he liked money and so it was not so strange that he worked at a bank. He had a woman and he liked her well enough but sometimes they argued and sometimes he thought to leave her and sometimes he wondered if he really loved her and sometimes he acted as if he didn't.

Her name was Sarah and she had two beautiful children and Nick did think them beautiful and he was certain that they would grow up to be doctors or lawyers. But they were not his children and when he drank with his friends at the bar he said about the entire thing - the woman, the children, the relationship, and love - "it's complicated."

Nick had a boss and, behind his back, the boss was called "the Shark." And to his face the boss was called "the Shark." And it was widely believed that the Shark had named himself the Shark although he always swore he was given the name when he was young for his ferocity in athletics. However, none of his classmates remembered anyone in elementary or even in high school called "the Shark".

One day after a particularly unpleasant day at the bank Nick went to the bar with his friends and they had beers and they said "how's work" and he said "it sucks" and they said "how's it going with Sarah" and he said "it's complicated." Then Nick went to see Sarah and her beautiful children at their stylish home. The children entertained themselves in the backyard and Nick and Sarah prepared a lovely pasta in the kitchen.

"What's wrong?" Sarah asked Nick. "You seem, well, you seem kind of drunk but you're an awfully quiet drunk tonight."

Nick said "I don't know. Another shit day at work. I can't keep working for that man."

"What did he do now?" she asked. She lifted a spoon of the lovely red sauce to her mouth and carefully tasted it.

"Same shit, tells me one thing, I do it, he doesn't like it or he doesn't get it, I don't know. He's a fucking maniac."

"I'm sorry, hon" Sarah said. "But you need to figure out how to work for him. Everywhere you go you're gonna have a boss, there's gonna be a Shark and he's a shark, sharks are cruel, they have nasty sharp teeth, grrrr!" she said with a smile and she pinched Nick's side and she laughed but he didn't.

"This isn't the life I wanted" he said. "This isn't who I wanted to be."

"Well who do you want to be?" she asked. Now she sounded annoyed.

"Well" Nick said and looked straight into her beautiful brown eyes. "I wanna be a shark."

The very next day the Shark called Nick into his office and informed him that his performance was unsatisfactory. He was given opportunity to improve but Nick was angry and felt mistreated and so the opposite happened and in two weeks time the Shark called him into his office again and fired him.

Sarah was supportive because she loved him but Nick started drinking more and more and he spent less time with her and with the children and before long she said to him "I can't do this" and he said "good, who fucking needs it?" and he left and she never saw him again.

Sarah saw Nick's friends at the bars and at the grocery sometimes. She would ask about him and it was never good news and one day his friend Jeff said "he's gone. His lease ended and he said he was going to go and see the world and I guess he did." She didn't ask to where and Jeff didn't know, anyway, and the next time that Sarah saw Jeff it had been years and neither said a word about Nick.

Nick drove around and around the country and to the south and the north and there were days that he was very happy but mostly he was lonely and depressed and lost. When he ran out of money he sold his car and with that money he was able to travel on foot for a time and he camped in a tent in the woods and he became a fair fisherman and huntsman. He dined on trout and venison and then he ran out of money again and he didn't mind it.

Because now he had become a different man. He did not have a job and he did not have a home and he did not have a lover and nothing seemed very complicated. He did not have money and he did not long for it and he wondered that he had once said "I wanna be a shark". In a sudden storm his tent was destroyed and he started to sleep under the stars and he was never more comfortable than he was when he dug into the soft dirt and curled up in its impression. He became over time a very excellent fisherman and huntsman and he no longer needed a rod and reel nor a rifle and that which he caught with his bare hands he ate immediately for he no longer needed a cookfire to savor the taste.

And one day Nick was no longer distinguishable from the beast of the forest. And it became complicated. As he was no longer mighty man, master of all, he found it necessary, against his will, to place himself in the hierarchy of his fellow beasts. The bears and the lions had given him berth when he fired his rifle but now they preyed upon him as they did the other animals. And when he began to understand the system of marking and of scents and of territory that were law in the forest he found it harder and harder to maintain his space and to sleep in the best earth and for the first time in many years he felt frustrated.

And of course as his heart still beat so did his loins ache and he was in want to mate and I will spare you the details of this but there were signals and rituals he was made to learn and for certain lovers he was made to fight with his claws and his teeth.

And Nick remembered a pain and humiliation he had once experienced when he had felt equally low and he no longer remembered that it was at the hands of his employer, the Shark, but you and I remember that. But he remembered, or perhaps his instinct told him, that if he was to remain for too long where he didn't belong he would suffer and so he left the forest.

He traveled by night and he kept to all fours when he passed through cities so that he would not be seen over fences and bushes and he found that it was much easier to move this way and so in the wide open spaces, too, he remained low to the ground. Soon he found that there was always space at the very bottom of the brambled bushes and under the barbed wire fences of the farmers and soon he was strong enough to slither with his belly and he then preferred to move this way. And when he was in need to cross lakes and rivers he found it very easy to swim by turning his abdomens one way and then the other and to capture fish in his teeth without using his hands and soon he was not using his hands nor his arms nor his feet nor his legs at all.

And then one day he came to the great sea. It had been so long since he had spoken and so long since he had had thoughts that without a moment's hesitation he slithered right into the surf and disappeared.

Under the water Nick enjoyed freedoms he had never imagined when he was a man but, of course, he didn't think of it like that. That's how we think. He spent his time ranging and eating and mating and these activities fatigued him so that he slept soundly each time that he needed to and he was never unhappy because he was not such a complicated creature.

And in search of food he went deeper and further and he enjoyed the taste of a nice perch but soon he found that he was able to have all the nutrition that he required from tiny particles in the water that a person like you and I would

never imagine would satisfy a man who had once loved so well a tasty Indian curry and a bowl of rice pudding.

Eating now almost exclusively krill or whatever it is a man turned seasnake turning slug might eat, Nick grew smaller and denser and he went about with his mouth wide open and all he needed swam right into his belly. And when he mated with the other slugs there was no pleasure and no pain and he didn't care that she was fat and she didn't care that he was an asshole and it didn't matter one bit that she had over one million children. It was so uncomplicated.

At last even eating and mating seemed a bit much and so one day he laid himself on the ocean floor with his mouth permanently open and his muscles stopped working and went away to nothing and on that day where he came to rest he stayed.

Like a stone he set day and night. He felt nothing, he thought nothing, he knew nothing. He only stared and he did this for at least a million years and meanwhile, on land, mankind destroyed itself and everything that lived and this ruined the seas.

And all was still. And nothing happened.

But one day life returned and it started with others like Nick, some of whom had grown discontented living life like a stone at the bottom of the sea. First they twitched and then they turned and what had seemed stones for so very long began to move about and soon they were slugs and fish and Nick, too, started to feel bored from having done nothing for a million years.

Of course, he did not know he was bored, he was too simple for feelings. And he didn't know the things that he thought because he was too simple for thoughts, too. But since you are a man and you live in the world of words I will translate for you.

Lying in the sand Nick thought things like "wouldn't it be fun to swim like that fish?" and "wouldn't it be swell to eat that fish?" and "wouldn't it be fun to have -" - well I can't print what he wanted to have with that fish because it's illegal. But ... you know.

And a crab came by with a shell on its back and he saw creatures return to the same rocky holes every night and he thought "wouldn't it be swell to have a home, a real home, again?" And he saw a turtle with the most beautiful shell and he thought "wouldn't I like to be attractive again and to feel desire and to make love" which was different from fucking sea slugs.

And one day a shark appeared in the neighborhood (and by neighborhood I mean Nick's sand, the rocky holes that the creatures slept in, and the space above where the fishes and the attractive turtle swam.) And the shark promptly ate the fishes, the turtle, and everything that he pleased. Then he crushed the rocks and sands with his powerful tail and he built himself a home from the debris and from that day forward he lorded over everything Nick knew.

And now you probably get it and you'll remember that Nick was still too simple to think but, of course, the thought he didn't actually have that changed the entire world was "I wanna be a shark."

Sadly Nick didn't evolve far. He did some cardio and yoga and bulked up and then he looked very tasty and the shark ate him, too. But as fishes and turtles and sharks were coming back, so, on land, were raccoons and ostriches and labradoodles and so was man. And man made the Commodore 64 and then the iPad and now we're all caught back up.

There's no moral. It's just a story. Or is it?