

Woody Allen's Rejected Twilight Zone Stories

by Steven Mark Kohn

Dear Rod,

Why haven't I heard from you? I keep sending you story ideas and...nothing. I'm starting to feel a bit insignificant here. But I think I've really nailed it this time. Here is my latest batch of Twilight Zone story treatments, and if I do say so myself, these are right on. So lemme know what you think, OK? Call me Rod. I'm waiting by the phone.

Thanks, Woody

"Can I Get Some Service?"

A man is sitting in a booth in a run-down delicatessen waiting for his scramble with bologna and garlic bagel. As he looks around, he realizes that there is not another soul to be seen anywhere. No customers, no employees. Nobody. The man gradually goes insane, as he comes to the terrifying realization that not only is he completely alone, but his coffee is cold. After a panicked visit to the empty kitchen and a tempestuous episode screaming complaints about the "lousy service" to anyone who will listen, he becomes tsumished and collapses on the floor. When he awakes, he is, in reality, in a crowded deli, and the service stinks.

"The Tale of Bip Hobson"

Bip Hobson is a pro football running back, the star of his team. Admired by millions, he is an icon of all that success embodies. As the big game draws near, he is approached by a strange, mystical little man who informs him that he has seen Bip's death in a vision. He tells Bip that if his team wins this next game, that will seal his fate and he will surely die. At first, Bip dismisses the omen, laughingly stuffing the little man into a garbage can, head first. But as the big game approaches, Bip seems to see the little old man everywhere he goes; at practice, in restaurants and on the street. The chilling and ubiquitous specter of the odd little man gradually convinces Bip that the omen is indeed true. Come game time, Bip is so terrified that he does everything in his power to help his team lose, so sure that if they win, he will die. He fumbles on key plays, drops passes, misses blocks, etc. As his teammates grow increasingly more irate with him, all he can do is watch the clock and hope for a speedy end to the game. The game ends and his team loses. Relieved, though staggeringly unpopular by now, he exits the locker room, emerging onto the darkened street. There he is greeted by the mysterious little old man, who, counting a huge wad of money, says "thanks a lot, dufass. You just made me a bundle".

"The Author"

A popular science fiction author is under the gun to finish his next book, and hopefully match the astounding success of his last effort. He is under tremendous pressure from his publisher, agent, wife, barber, next door neighbor and countless strangers who taunt him mercilessly. He sits at the typewriter, staring blankly into space, unable to generate any material. Depressed, he decides to go to a movie matinee. In the theater, he discovers that the movie on the screen is about a science fiction writer who is under the gun to finish his next book, and hopefully match the astounding success of his last effort. Unbelieving, the author watches the film, which gradually reveals the brilliant story which the fictional

writer triumphantly comes up with. The author goes home, collapses on the couch, and dreams that he is watching a movie about a science fiction writer who is under the gun to finish his next book, and hopefully match the astounding success of his last effort. Believing that his dream is the true inspiration, he begins work on a novel about a popular science fiction author who is under the gun to finish his next book, and hopefully match the astounding success of his last effort. After finishing the manuscript in record time, the author shows it to his wife, who, upon completing it, says "isn't this the same story that's playing down the street at the Loews?" Frantic, the author runs down to the theater, buys a ticket and sits in the dark to watch the movie again. To his mounting horror, he discovers that the movie about a science fiction writer who is under the gun to finish his next book, and hopefully match the astounding success of his last effort is no longer playing, and that he has spent good money to see "Attack of the 50 Foot Woman".

"I Dream of Scranton"

A woman is in a bus station waiting for her bus to Scranton. While she sits patiently, a number of people come and go, taking no notice of her. Families clamor by, young couples in love, groups of teenagers, etc. They all get on their respective busses and depart, leaving the woman on the same bench she has occupied all day long. Night falls and she is still sitting on her bench, alone in the eerie twilight, waiting in grim solitude. She finally gets up the courage to approach the ticket booth and talk to the strange wrinkled little man behind the bars. "When does the bus for Scranton get here?" she implores timidly. "There ain't no bus for Scranton comin' through here" replies the odd old man. "Oh", she says blankly. "Damn".

"The Wrath"

A Preacher in a small Appalachian village tells his congregation that at midnight, the Devil will come to their village and take all of the sinners back to Hell with him. This impassioned indictment strikes mortal terror into the townspeople. As midnight approaches, the frightened villagers implore the Preacher to absolve them of their sins so that their souls can be saved, but he rebuffs them, saying that if they have sinned, then they deserve to burn. The tension mounts as the villagers huddle in their homes, terrified, awaiting the stroke of midnight. After the twelfth bell has tolled, the Devil appears, and knocks on the *Preacher's* door. When the Preacher answers, the Devil smacks him in the head and tells him to "shut up already." The Devil then raids the Preacher's pantry, taking a snack for the road.

"Where Shall Be Our Battleground?"

It's World War Two and an American submarine is patrolling the depths of the North Atlantic. They intercept a frantic radio broadcast that informs them that due to the release of deadly chemicals, all life on earth is doomed to annihilation. The broadcast states further that the surface of the planet is so contaminated that it will be uninhabitable for the next 50 years. Not knowing that it is actually a fictional dramatic presentation, they decide to remain on the ocean floor for 50 years, surviving on rations, plankton and sea cucumbers. After the 50 years has passed, the crew, all old men now, decide to surface. They pull into New York harbor to discover that not only is everything fine, but that war is no longer practiced and humans live peacefully all over the world. The crew receive the Guinness Book Of World Records award for "The Stupidest Thing Ever Done", and they are booked on several daytime talk shows.

“The Act”

A lounge singer, Alfredo Fettucini is in the twilight of his career. Playing to small clubs around the country, he often recalls how things were when he was a “big shot” and “rollin’ in serious dough”. Most disturbing to him though, are the constant requests for him to sing his one big hit, from many years past; “Boy, I Sure Do Dig Santa Barbara”. From club to club, he is inundated with requests for this song, which has become his identity, a curse which he rues, having long lost his ardor for “that stupid friggin song”. While appearing at a retirement home in Boca Raton, an old woman pleads with him to sing “Boy, I Sure Do Dig Santa Barbara”. Fettucini finally snaps, and after an impassioned tirade, he storms off the stage, vowing never to sing that song again. His agent pleads with him to sing the song and please the many millions of “sweet old birds” who love him for it, but Fettucini is steadfast. In an unexpected twist of fate, and to his horror, he suddenly finds himself transformed into an unemployed person.

“What’s On TV?”

A family buys a brand new television set, thrilled that they can finally enjoy the programs that they have only heard others talk about. Soon, sitting in front of the TV becomes their evening ritual. Initially, these evenings are meaningful times, shared by the family and filled with closeness and good feeling. But as time goes by, they become more and more absorbed into the world of the television, often quoting character’s lines, singing commercial jingles and making trenchant references to situations which occurred on their favorite programs. In a surprising twist, their IQ’s all drop and they become idiots.

“Climb Aboard!”

Seeking a new life, a man stands in line with his last few coins to buy a ticket for the ill-fated voyage of the Titanic. The would-be passengers chatter on excitedly about the ship, it’s size, the splendor of its appointments and the golden opportunities that await one in the New World. When the man finally gets to the ticket booth, he is informed that the ship is full and no more tickets are available. Despondent, he makes plans to stow away in the cargo hold. To celebrate his plan, and the dream of a new life, he joins friends at the local pub. Drinking heavily, he forgets to watch the clock. When the time comes to sneak aboard, he is still at the pub, totally inebriated. Moments later he is told by a friend that the ship has left port and that he has missed his chance. He breaks down, sobbing heavily, and passes out. When he awakes, it is night and the bar is closing. He walks out onto the eerily deserted street and stares into the sky. Suddenly a truck comes barreling around the corner and plows right into him, flattening him and killing him instantly. As the truck pulls away, the camera pulls up to reveal the writing on the back of it: “Titanic Diaper Service”.

“She Ain’t What She Used to Be”

Mary Lou is the most beautiful and popular girl in her high school. She has a tight circle of “fashionable” friends and is very snobbish toward almost everyone else. When a skinny, acne-covered, awkward little boy asks her to the prom, she publicly humiliates him with derisive laughter and insults. Embarrassed and broken hearted, the young man points his bony finger at her and curses her thus: “You shall become ugly! You shall lose your mind! You shall be forgotten by everyone! You shall be miserable!” Seventy years pass, and in a shocking twist of fate, it all comes true.

“There’s No Place Like Home”

Three astronauts take off on a planned mission to Mars. Shortly after leaving Earth’s orbit, a technical malfunction forces them to attempt a speedy return to Earth. After a harrowing near-fatal episode in space, they succeed in returning safely, assuming that everything is as they left it. But is it? One of the men, who is having marital difficulties and has two children who are disciplinary problems, returns home to find his wife loving, and his children respectful and obedient, ye even happy to see him. Another, finds his estranged fiancée is once again loving and committed, eager to give it another try. The third discovers that his dysfunctional family has miraculously acquired an affectionate and gregarious attitude. Further, they find the media very interested in them and indeed all of America full of support and good wishes. The three are most perplexed by these sudden changes and conclude that this is not the real Earth, but that they must have been transported into some weird parallel dimension. They decide to hijack a rocket ship in an attempt to leave Earth’s orbit, cross back into their own dimension and somehow return to the world they left behind. They sneak onto Cape Canaveral, assault several soldiers, steal a ship and take off amid gunshots and blaring sirens. They orbit Earth several times and re-enter, believing that they have “crossed over”. Upon landing, they are horrified to discover that they have indeed crossed over into another dimension; one in which everyone speaks backwards, wears lobsters on their heads and you can only get valet service on Thursdays.

“Requiem for Scooter”

The town bumpkin, Scooter Tibbins is perennially teased and tormented by bullies, authority figures and most everyone else. He vows that he would do anything to be respected and change his lot. Later, while browsing in a strange antiquarian book store, he comes across a dusty old book of incantations. He reads on, engrossed, and discovers a chant that will give him the strength of twenty men. With visions of exacting revenge on bullies and winning the hearts of the local girls, he reads on. The book tells him that after speaking the chant, he will instantly be transformed. The book further states that when he utters the word “love”, he will be restored to his former self, the logic being that if one can truly love another, one does not need spells or magic. Scooter recites the incantation and “poof”, he is now a mighty fellow. He demonstrates his new-found strength for several awed onlookers by crushing a drinking fountain, swallowing a cat and pulling up a sidewalk block with his tongue. Now it’s off to bully the bullies. After a number of scenes in which he mercilessly pounds a few bullies and boasts of his exploits, it becomes clear that this gift has created an unattractive change in Scooter’s personality. Later, while showing off for some girls, Scooter lifts a car and holds it over his head. Impressed, one of them asks him if he’d like to go have a malt with her. “I’d love to” says Scooter, and with that he is smushed flat.

“The Debate”

In the heat of a Presidential debate, the two candidates come to the horrifying conclusion that they actually agree on almost everything. Eerie music as camera pans slowly across the faces of stunned registered voters.

Rod,
I have a lot more of these. Lemme know what you think.
Woody