



Plain Text - Day 15

Wiley Davis

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Will had missed the plank floors of the farmhouse. And now he sat, steaming coffee cup in hand, looking at the floor. The pinewood planks, each about six centimeters wide and roughly matched to its neighbors, were drying and gray. They'd always been drying and gray, Will thought. Some of them warped, side to side, so that they formed shallow concave troughs running the length of the kitchen. The edges of the warped planks stuck up to varying degrees, just enough to catch the toes of the uninitiated. Will tested the coffee with a sip and noted that he'd managed to traverse the kitchen and get the coffee made without a single trip over the uneven surface. Cheap, roughly made, a floor to walk upon, but one that lived, creaking and tight in the cold Winter and knocking and loose in the warm Summer. Will liked it because it was an ugly floor you had to live with and watch if you wanted a graceful performance from your coffee making.

That floor once swallowed a silver dollar Will had dropped. A gap between the planks opened up before the coin hit the floor. Will swore there was no sound. The coin never hit wood, just vanished beneath the floor. His father, called in for desperate consultation, told Will he had two options. "You can forget the dollar," he said. "Or you can go after it. You know where the tools are."

Will was six. And so, while his father walked the fields, Will nervously collected tools from the shed, tools he didn't yet know the names or functions of. He grabbed several screwdrivers, a hammer, a block plane, and a number of other items completely inappropriate to the task at hand. He piled them into a bucket and dragged them into the kitchen. He tried the plane first but quickly discovered it had nothing to offer in the plank-lifting department. He bent two screwdrivers and made quite a racket with the hammer. Gary stopped in from time to time. "Forgot my sandwich," he'd say, or "Hot out there. Needed a cold glass of milk." And he'd usually leave saying something like, "I think you've almost got it."

On day two of the excavation, Will discovered the pry bar. It was a revelation. It had been there, hanging on the wall the whole time, of course, but only on day two was he ready to see its function. And boy did he see it. An electric thrill, running back to the kitchen, steel bar in hand. On day three, little Will finally pulled the plank. And there, lying on the damp earth amidst the spiders, was the coin, nearly forgotten in the struggle. He snatched it up with a quick grab, on account of the spiders. When Gary came home he looked at the hole in the floor and the swath

of tools spread about the kitchen and smiled. "You got it. Good job. Now you gotta put it back."

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In a world of free food and networked living, something interesting is happening down in Baja. A fifteen year old girl named Zoe, her biologist father, and a coastline of drugged-out fishermen help us reconcile the conflict between physical reality and virtual freedom.

Plain Text - Day 12 (2009)

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