

New Eden Avenue: An Origin Story

When God evicted the animals out of Eden, he drew the line when the plants were about to leave. It was decided after the first bite that humans could not be trusted to stand themselves naked, or that animals could be trusted to keep their mouths shut (They can talk; they're just sore their immortality was taken from them). The rest of God's creations, Tomatoes, Cucumbers, Asparagii, Carrots... they were members of the victim's family in all this. The fruit itself did no wrong. It simply found itself crumbling between the jaws of a very disobediant couple.

"Immortality's great and all," said Larry, "But I want to see what the folks are up to."

This might have been the moment gossip was invented, but inventions weren't invented yet. The fabled cucumber might have been the *creator* of everyone's favorite genre of conversation, but creation was God's bread and butter. Given all the subtractions that had been happening all around the garden--people, snakes, law-abiding public nudity--He saw fit to throw in a few additions for a change.

The first of these was television. Clearly, the days, years, months and minutes without the Bible needed something to tide us all over 'til the very first coming. Next, there was cable. History was just about to boom, and everyone could tell it. Murder! Floods! Plagues! Famine! Nothin' we want to miss. Finally, they got a mailbox. This was before the invention of literature. By then, inventions would be invented, and they'd have the means to catch up to Moses Mandment in terms of stoney scrawls.

The first things to show up was McGee and Me. It ran and reran without pause, for no remote came with the set, let alone broadcast stalling. Bob missed out on some of the pivotal scenes; he had to get up and shoo away indecent folk trying to sneak their way back into the garden.

"Look, pal, you had your chance." Actually, the attempted intruder wasn't born in Eden. It was Adam and Eve Eden who blew it for the rest. "You can't come back in and live forever. That's just not the way it is."

"But those who reside in Eden gain immortality! Everyone knows that."

Not exactly true of the mailbox jumpers. Without any post, they didn't know what to do with it, so they figure they'd go and use it for a diving board.

Splitter-splack.

A little known fact about biological history is that eggs were actually a plant once, but the ancestral couple went extinct at the first mailbox dive, and that is what Bob pointed to in refutation of intruder Zelkernana's claim.

"Nuh-uh! That's invincibility. Immortals don't die of natural causes. Invincibles never die of *unnatural* causes."

And all this time, Bob was missing out on the good stuff. Incidentally, God was rather fond of that now extinct creation. Not done with his creative drive, he combined the egg vegetables with the reproductive strategies of chickens. The legend lives on in the barn, inside the omelette. The omn-nom-*nomelette*.

When Bob returned, it was Larry's turn to miss the next episode. "The last one declaired something about a sweepstakes," explained Archibald. "Larry was all invigorated to mail in his."

"Sweepstakes?" This was way too confusing. "But there's no such thing as sweepstakes. What does he think he's going to do?"

Remember, now. This was before literacy came about, so Larry stuffed the mailbox with banana peels and poison ivy.

Through the broadcast experience of Veggie-vision, the New Edenites got a glimpse of what was going on outside in the human world. Focus on the Family had a much greater grip on things. The second thing to come on was the whole dill-pickle debacle between Cain and Abel. They were spared the more dramatic bits, although Eve did niggle-nag and finger-wag her cuck into grocery shopping. When he snuck out of that duty, she split the duties between her sons. Able brought back the most expensive meat, bought directly from his own allowance. Cain, on the other hand, opted for the low-qual deals, frugaling his wares for arcade on rainier days. And we all know how that turned out. Cain drove his motorcycle over Able's hot dog stand, then pushed him face down in the mud.

"Grumpy," said Junior. "I'm not at all like them."

"You're an only child," Laura reminded. "You can't be like."

They weren't the ones he needed to worry about being like. A couple of lizards tried to sneak back in, but again, Bob shooed them away.

The flood reminded them all of the opposite of what they'd been through themselves; instead of getting all the animals into one place, they'd seen God get all of the animals out of one place. The Egyptian slave trade and the salad of plagues was seven kinds of messed up, especially near the end

when Pharoah's son got kicked out of the Mesopotamian Glee club. Everyone's son got kicked out of the glee club if they didn't smash their mama's prize casserol and smear it all over the doorknob.

"I'd sure hate to be in that guy's shoes," said Mr. Nezzzer. "I'd sure hate to be in his sandals, too. Kicked out of the glee club? Mm, mmm. That is some nasty business."

"What are shoes?" wondered Bob. "What are sandals?"

Larry seldom went to bed with the rest of them back then. He often stayed up waiting for word of his sweepstakes. Around this time, Bob was getting worried about everyone's constant exposure to Veggie-vision, and thought the simpler things in life were falling by the shore, dithering sandcastles. Walks through the forest, gazing at the clouds, where did it all come from? Where did it go? Poor archaic tomato.

"Woah, what is that?" Among the things Larry *did* catch was the deliverance of the ten commandments, the first written words in history. "You mean, words can be written in stone? Maybe that's why they're not getting my sweepstakes!"

And so, Larry tried something new. He wrote some special words in the dirt, then shoveled up that dirt and deposited it into the mailbox. He waited another week or so, an then the electricity went out. On the TV. It was the only thing in the garden that needed electricity in the first place.

"See? I told you all immortality passed away," rubbed in Bob. "Well, all we can do now is bury it. Who are you?"

A wild-looking hobo peered beadily out from behind a foosh-bush. He looked like he hadn't aged for a very long time, and it was then that Bob came to a realization.

"Why, you trickster! You didn't gain immortality from Eden, you brought mortality in from the outside! Get out, that's why the TV came down, get out!"

"But I'll perish! I'll simply perish!"

"You should have thought of that before you broke the rules again, now out!"

Mortality was on full display in the invention of the first tomato-boo. Woop, did I say invented? I meant... come about. Again, creation was licensed to God. Oh wait, not mortality, vincibility. A jacket of sauced-up tomatoes pelted the wild man's hide as he tore from the garden and collapsed into dust. He surely perished, even though the TV was the bigger deal.

"Now we'll never know what's going on." Junior shed a tear.

It was a sad, sad day, worse than the day of your lowest report card. Without the TV in their lives, the news of the world rolled under the rug with all the dustmites and weeds that nobody wants to see. But they did want to see. Blessed union, did they ever want to see.

Things began to look up when Larry, having long given up waiting on news of his precious sweepstakes, thought the mailbox would be a great place to hide during games of hide and seek. Yes, hide and seek was the first game. It had come about. Inventions had yet to be invented, at least around New Eden.

Well, when Larry crawled in, he didn't land on a pile of dirt, peels, and ivy. It was a strange, flakey substance, like nothing he'd ever felt. "Hey, guys, come take a look at this!"

He was so excited he forgot what they were playing, so he lost the game. What is a game, even if the very first one, to a new discovery like this? Larry's discovery was revealed to be a pile of letters. Epistles, specifically, signed by a fellow named Paul.

"What are those?" Bob was the most confused of all. "I've never seen anything like them."

"Oh, do let's have a look! Let's read them, they will regail us all with fables and tales!"

This Paul fellow knew of their existence. Unlike the men they were used to, his road to immortality was not something to be snatched over the threshold of some long-forbidden garden. He spoke at length of faith and salvation, and of the miracles of Jesus.

None of the Veggies fully understood it. Larry knew more about the banana peels' parents than the words in the epistles, but even he found the words themselves to leave preach-prints on his heart. Paul had heard of them, too, and he told children all throughout the land of their adventures and commitment.

Bob took a look at the TV. He took a look at the cable. "Well, we can be sure of one thing for sure: It's not coming back on."

"Hey!" Wild idea Larry had a big idea production. "What if *we* were the ones on TV?"

"What are you talking about, Larry?" said Bob. The rest of the garden listened intently.

"Well, what if instead of reruns all the time, people saw us acting out history? It'd be a hit! We'd sing songs, tell jokes, teach lessons, the whole package."

The neighboring Edenians sang in anticipation. Think of the legacy they would all leave! Video Tapes, Plushies, Websites, Monopoly Games, Happy Meal Toys, all before these things could manifest into the inventions of mankind.

As a side note, modern rumor has it that bacteria were to be written into the series, as were protozoae and fungi. However, the obvious reason not was the microscopic tendencies of the former, and the terrible dietary happits of the former. Still, the fungi do appear in a missing episode before they were fired, in a retelling of Noah's ark, which was scrapped because the animal rights

mob had their guns all loaded. Never mind that all the animals they were trying to free were just the Shrooms in costumes.

"Wait a minute, gang, we're getting a bit ahead of ourselves," worried Bob, but Larry had already mailed in the sweepstakes.

And be it thus, Larry waited by the mailbox all of the following week for the ultimate answer. Bob would object to anyone calling it the ultimate answer, so the penultimate answer, then. After a week of adapting more palatable versions of the Pauline letters, a week of writing relevant lyric studios, and a week of rehearsing on stages and strings, that penultimate answer arrived.

"To Beloved Eden Garden, Esq; Who won the sweeps? You did, you did, who won the sweeps? Eden Garden won the sweeps!"

The kitchen you see on the screen nowadays was exactly what they won, once kitchens were invented, once inventions were invented. It came with a computer, once those were invented, too. All the stagecraft and witticisms, instruments and such came forth in their time, just as the broadcasts went out in theirs.

And the vegetables live on and on...