

10:1 Against and Rising

by

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I've got the board on retro and I'm spinning down the way. I like the way the wheels wobble and I can feel the road, every bump, every crack, every stone. I know some guys set it so the board just stops cold every once in a while and they go flying. They say it adds realism. They like the pain. They like showing off their scabby arms and their scars. I knew a guy who walked around in a cast for six months once. Said he broke his leg doing a flip, a bad landing... missed his board or something. Liked the game so much, he gave up boarding completely and just took to being a wounded vet. Shot a hole through his jacket to add that touch... you know, that touch. And he would tell you all about the war as he fingered the hole, limped about, and tried to act all crazy, schizophrenic, and shit. He was good, a true believer. He knew what it was about. I'm sure I don't.

Back in the moment, I do an Ollie off the wall... or a half-and-half over-under. I don't really know the proper names for the stunts. I don't really care. I'm running Slum Board 2.03 as the override, and it would tell me, but I've got the commentary turned off. You may have noticed, I like running my own commentary. And then when that runs slim and my mind turns a blank, I do another 360 watermelon grab. I heard it on a promo. It sounded cool, like something a grom like me would do.

I'm not so gone, though. I know I'm walking down the street. I simply prefer to think that I kick-flipping it down the way as I skate past bombed out wrecks of buildings. It's total Tommy Two Tone, but then you knew that. I forget the name -- the name of his world. I'll never get it back. I dumped the plot long ago.

I'm not big on plot. I don't even run the skins from that lame run anymore, but the burnt out shell of a world. It calls to me. I even like the way the wheels grind over the debris, the hum. If I was running it real, I'd fall for sure, but who needs The Real? Not me. So I don't fall or stumble, or even slow down as land Ollie end over, perfectly placed, over a steel rail.

For the most part I've been able to put the zombies out of my mind. They're not really zombies, not like Zombie Nation. Just folks I don't care for, flaks who don't care for me. They don't matter. Not that I matter, but we're all happier that way -- without the other. So I weave in and out, and circle around them. Sometimes I push them over, but this always makes me uncomfortable. I've heard stories. The news is full of them. Some fr@cking idiot breaking loose, turning off the override, hitting a glitch, and then... the accident, that isn't really an accident. They go over the edge, fall down -- like way down. And I don't want to follow the trail any further. It doesn't take me to a happy place. So figure it out on your own.

Like usual, downtown is a wreck. Nothing is different, nothing has changed. The Same-Old Same-Old and their buddies. Some of them must have names, but who really cares. Tom, Slick, Sid, David, and Harry: he's all the same. Just different names on different days. Gra'gl help him if he ever turns off. He wouldn't even know his real name.

No sense being cynical. I glide up, reset my ride, and we coast around doing a flip and a kick to pass the time. I did turn it all off once. I really did. It was weird, eerie, just down right creepy. We're all just walking around in circles like sleep walking zombies, but then you knew that. Still, that's not how it is now... even if it is. They're doing their flips and jumps, and if seeing isn't believing... I guess you may have noticed, I can't get it out of my mind. It's a bad day -- one of many.

Some nameless zombie burns through. "Watch me do a 590 half bail on a rejection rail," and although he's only started to name the trick, I haven't got the will. I cut the feed. Let him find

his own voice, his own audience. All around me, everyone's doing the same. All my life, it's just the way of it. Killing a feed here, loading it up there.

Me and Tom, Slick, Sid, or What's-His-Name do the exchange like we do everyday. Tit for Tat. I feed him and he feeds me. It's all the same. I get my fix. I don't know what he gets.

I like smoking RETR©. I don't know why. I could say I do, but I don't. And while I light, the scene shifts. Psychedelic Kicks is on the top of the charts and all around me clandestine bottles are brought to lips, spoons are fed, vials are sniffed, and I roll a spliff - - whatever the bloody hell that means.

But it fades...

Tommy didn't do me wrong, I'll tell you that. Not that he could. I got my filters, my protection, and then... All we did was brace skin bro. Just hey, howzit, but then there you are. And I find a rock, all alone in the sculpture that graces the park and inhale -- something that isn't there.

It's pure Chaos, like pure -- like the Fifth Track. And it's got my number. I could go on and on. In my mind, I do.

I don't know how long I zone. Time has passed. The lights are on now. They glow, you know, like they glow. I need a tag to explain. I mean like really G-L©W! and @LL-Th@T. Backwards, forwards, and side to side. I'm back on my ride, dancing in circles, just feeling the vibration, working my toes. I get off on it. Just circling tight, hogging the center, and never minding the others. Let them dance around. It's my time to shine.

It's afternoon, but my watch says it's night. It's getting late. Time to blow.

I spin off and watch the stars streak through the sky. A comet turns on, spins around, and cycles away. The moon explodes and the world becomes one. You know what I mean? I'm saying, my mind is just along for the ride... just along for the ride.

I come to and now I'm making time. But to where? I know not. I watch the shops slip by. The request comes through, but I let Tommy slip away. Let him find his own way. My will is not my own. And that's when I hear the roosters and smell cows. Would you believe it? She's riding a horse.

Fairy-Fairy Princess, this can't be real, not really real. So I shut it down and catch a glimpse, but she's for real... or real enough. I let it ride.

"What's the score?" Cool, Sam I am. Kicking off my board, spinning it in my hand it turns into a sword. Somewhere along the way, I knew that trick would come in handy

"Demons... dragons," she suggests hopefully, eager.

"I'm a lover, not a fighter." Sam I am.

She shrugs. Like she wanted to be waist deep in blood and guts. And what does she have against dragons anyway?

"How about a tavern?"

"I can hang," and so it is settled.

Nothing but the finest Ice Vine all around, and seeing my pipe, she loads me with K'fr. Tit for tat. We sway. We spin. Our lips meet and we play.

Like ice, like cold, like sweet rain. I could just fall down and let it all flow, but she's not for that, not yet.

Pulling away, she cues up the band -- Shove mixed with accents of Push. It's all of the rage. But don't get me wrong, it's a doable mix. And as she takes the lead, I'm happy to follow.

She's got her friends along for the ride. Happily, she doesn't force the exchange. I appreciate that. I really do. I don't need to know her -- like really, really know her -- but she doesn't agree.

Outside my board has turned to a horse. The Fl#tch#r: Death/Head sticker gives it away. And I can see she's done things with the sky...

"Nice."

"It's my own."

Again, "Nice, never would have known." But of course I would. I did.

She lets it drop. What's there to do? Point out the clinks?
Point out the flaws?

Down the way and her parents place is like a castle, like a
real castle. I let the rig fall, just to be sure. And I find the squalor
refreshing, comforting, like home.

“You're off?” It's a question. Wonderment. Why?

“Sometimes,” I agree. And to my delight she hits the kill
switch.

We are all alone now. Just her, and me, and a narrative
override that never clicks off.

I kiss her again, hit record, and wonder how much I can sell it
all for.

Lips like wine, eyes of silver and gold...

Or unedited harsh, brutal and cold.

She tags it for half, but who would have known? Her ditzy
romance trumps my version of alienated youth 10:1.

Oh, well.

At least we've got the grudge match scheduled for High
N00N.

Can you hear me shrug?

Got to love a Repeat Offender.