

Son of Strelka, Son of God

Dan Warren

<http://danwarren.blogspot.com> (or check out The International House of Dancakes on iTunes).

For the past four years, I've been working slowly but obsessively on this very odd project. Bit by bit I've dissected Obama's self-read autobiography into thousands of very short phrases, usually one to ten words or so, and have used these snippets to tell a completely different story from the original. I've then set the story to music. The story is called Son Of Strelka, Son Of God. Broadly speaking, it tells the story of an ugly dog-faced demigod who recreates the world after it is destroyed. It's about thirty minutes long, and lies in some weird grey area between audiobook and electronic music.

Despite all the work I put into it, I honestly don't expect this project to ever make a single cent. It's almost certainly fair use, but that doesn't mean that there wouldn't be legal hassles if I tried to sell it. That being the case, I thought the most appropriate thing to do would be to release it into the wild on America's birthday, 7/4/2011. If you like the album, please share it!

The cover art is by Ainsley Seago, who also did the animatic (and eventually will do the animation) for chapter 1. I fudged it around a bit in photoshop, so blame the layout on me. The second chapter animation is being done by Adam Bozarth, who you can hear on the hilarious Left Handed Radio podcast. Most of the sounds you hear are either me or Obama, but there were also some key found sound contributions from Teresa Iglesias and Earwicker, as well as the frenetic skitching of the fabulous EBA, whose Shapeless Mass podcast is something you should absolutely check out. I also owe a shout-out to Matt Brandley, Ainsley Seago, and Teresa Iglesias for extensive comments on early drafts.

I'm now trying to find people to animate or at least illustrate the various chapters of the story. The first two chapters are already being animated, but there are at least seven more to go. The rough drafts of the first two chapters have been shown at the Alamo Drafthouse's open screen night, and have been very popular even in their unfinished state – I even won second place last time and got a free movie ticket (I now owe Bozarth half of a movie ticket). If anyone out there is interested in animating (or just illustrating) a chapter, let me know at dan.l.warren@gmail.com. You never know, you may also earn half of a movie ticket!

Chapter 1: Creation

Our hero's name is Stanley, but he doesn't really show up until Chapter 3. Stanley's father is the first proto-man, who fell as a fruit from the first tree. He found the world an empty and desolate place, so he climbed to the top of the tree and began creating animals and plants and whatnot just by speaking their names. He gets really excited about the process, and accidentally creates a monkey in thin air, which promptly plummets to his death. He

realizes that he needs to be a little more thoughtful about this process, and finishes by creating many of the beautiful things in the world. Then he disappears.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Any38uNUeIM>

Here is a moving storyboard for this chapter, which is being animated by Ainsley Seago.

Chapter 2: The Golden Age (with found sound by Teresa Iglesias)

This chapter tells of the rise of civilization. At the start there are only uncivilized tribes in the forest, but they begin to desire something more out of life. They move indoors and become increasingly sophisticated. Eventually they build cities and roads, and they become isolated by their own success.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PfrDjk0wP4>

Here is a rough draft of chapter 2, which is being animated by Adam Bozarth.

Chapter 3: Son Of Strelka

Stanley is born. He is the son of the creator from chapter 1 and a human woman, and his village expected him to be some sort of savior. Instead, he looks freakish. He is covered in yellow hair and has a dog-like face. Not in some cute furry ^_^ anime way, though, he is a disturbing freak of nature. With the exception of his mother, the people of his village despise him. They also despise his mother for giving birth to a freak, so they are both forced to leave. They go their separate ways, and Stanley is left to wander the world alone, a deformed, orphaned child.

Chapter 4: The Decline

As the chapter starts, we see Stanley wandering the land. Months and years pass, and as Stanley grows up the world becomes increasingly violent and nasty. Finally war is declared, and tanks and troops begin marching through the cities of the world. Eventually the gods themselves come to earth and begin marching on all of the world's cities.

Stanley encounters an apocalyptic religious cult made up of children. They recognize him as having some sort of power, and try to get them to join their cause. Stanley demurs, and the children grow angry at him.

Chapter 5: The Fall (with scratchin' and sound effects by [EBA](#))

As Stanley stands there contemplating the children's angry faces, the world splits open and blood pours out. A huge winged monster comes out of the crack in the earth and asks Stanley who he is. Stanley answers, and the monster goes off to generally wreak havoc on the landscape with all of the other gods. Shit continues to get real, and we see the oceans rise up and flood the landscape. Buildings fall, fire is everywhere. As part of this we see a truly gigantic turtle stomping skyscrapers to the ground and just generally fucking things up. As a result of all of this, many of the children are killed and others maimed. Dirty, injured refugees are everywhere. Stanley tries to ask the few remaining children what the hell is going on, but he realizes that they don't really know much more than he does.

Chapter 6: The Turtle

Stanley goes to space to talk to the turtle that supports the world, who was one of the main participants in the destruction of the cities. The turtle is off-duty now, and is just chilling out at home. He's taken his shell off, and is just sitting around wearing a wifebeater and a hat. He smokes and drinks constantly, and basically looks like someone's cranky old grandfather. They sit and talk about the destruction of the world, and why the turtle participated. He tells Stanley that he took part in the apocalypse just out of a general love of destruction, and plus he kinda hated America for sending astronauts into his home (space), where all they can do is die and fall back to earth. Stanley realizes that the turtle isn't going to be able to help him.

Chapter 7: The Buddha

Stanley and the turtle go to meet the Buddha to see if he can restore the world. Buddha is huge, fat, made of bronze, and is stuffed into a suit that is slightly too small for him. He has an office to match. He wears a cross around his neck, oddly enough. His manner is initially something like a used car salesman or overly phony politician, and he tries to make light of the situation. Stanley is not amused, and gets angry. Eventually it becomes clear that Buddha is actually incapable of restoring the world. Stanley is despondent but determined to fix the world somehow.

Chapter 8: Restoration (with found sound by Earwicker)

Stanley remembers his father's power to create, and starts to wonder whether he has the same ability. He stands in a desolate and empty landscape. Initially he is hesitant to try creating anything for fear that he won't do it right, but eventually he musters the courage and starts to talk and move slowly. He starts by creating the home he wishes he'd had as a child – a pretty little village by the ocean, surrounded by giant trees, populated by friendly and gentle people. He loves this vision and feels comforted by it.

He then begins to recite the names of the dead in an attempt to bring them back, and is surprised that it works. As soon as people come back into the world, though, the simplicity of his vision gives way to all of the complexities we associate with modern life – cities, cars, businesses, etc. The world becomes hectic and busy, but he is still pleased with what he has created.

Chapter 9: Son Of God

Stanley stands and watches the world he has created, waiting for his father. His father appears, and is much older and more frail than he was when he was last seen. His father is proud of him, and they have a short conversation about where Stanley found his faith. Stanley recalls the monkey from chapter 1, and jokingly says that he couldn't possibly have screwed it up as badly as his father did. His father laughs and agrees. They talk more about who Stanley is and his role in the world, and spend the day together talking and joking. As Stanley is taking over his father's godlike role in the world, his father begins to age and fade as his own power disappears. Stanley carries his father to bed, and at this point his father is very decrepit. As his final act, his father brings Stanley's mother back. As Stanley and his mother laugh and embrace, the father crumbles into dust.

Stanley and his mother discuss his role in the world. Mom thinks that he's still basically living out the story that his father laid out for him, while Stanley thinks that he now has the ability to determine his own destiny. Finally, Stanley lays his head on his mother's lap and falls asleep. When he wakes up the next morning, the sun is shining and everything is beautiful.