

Creative Nonfiction: Cordova Misadventure

By Sean Madden

“Are you sure this is the right place?” asked Cameran, a doubtful look in his eye.

“Well... of course it is,” I retorted as I paid the cab driver. “Just who the hell do you think I am?”

“An idiot who doesn’t know where he is,” answered Cameran coldly.

“Oi! That was uncalled for! Besides, you weren’t supposed to answer that.”

The cab driver pulled away, letting us off at the destination I supposedly asked for. But in all honesty, this looked nothing like the mall I had in mind. Compared to the one I went to before with my parents, this lousy strip mall had absolutely nothing but a shoe store in plain sight. Doubt began to cloud my mind... this wasn’t the right place.

“So, if this is the right place, then where’s the GameStop? You said it was here... right?” Cameran asked, with an eyebrow raised. “So come on then. I’m dying to see this GameStop that you said was at this mall...”

At last, I couldn’t deny it any longer. Holding in the truth would simply make me look even worse as time passed. “Okay, okay! I guess this is the wrong place. But how was I supposed to know? I’ve only been to that mall once, and it’s been months since my last trip there. I only knew that we had to go to ‘a mall,’ so that’s what I told the driver! I had no idea we would end up at this crap-tastic place!”

“You screwed up.” Cameran scowled at me. Its times like this that I was afraid he’s going to lunge out and hit me for no reason. “You screwed up and dropped us at the wrong place, you dingle-dork! Unbelievable... well, you better call the Yellow Cab again.”

“Wait, no! We just got here, and it’d be rude to get that guy here again after he just finished a job due to my mistake. Besides, I don’t want to waste these,” I said showing him the discount cab passes I purchased back on campus. “We’ll be charged an extra fee for having to make another trip, and we probably won’t have enough for the trip back if we do that!”

“But... you’re just being stupid!” howled Cameran in a childish fashion. “If all else fails, you can use your own cash, or...”

Tuning out Cameran like I usually do in the midst of one of his fits, I decided to look around for something to eat. We were planning on eating at the mall, but that plan had failed. Glancing across the road, I saw a Wendy’s on the other side. The thoughts of a thick, juicy burger overpowered my mind as my stomach took control of my actions.

“It’s no use arguing over an empty stomach. You’re probably hungry too, if I’m not mistaken,” I declared after I caught a break in the middle of Cameran’s verbal assault. “Let’s go to that Wendy’s, and then we can formulate out a strategy for how to get to the mall.”

“Yes, boss,” Cameran said, imitating one of the characters from one of those shows he watches. “... Even though you messed up.”

Jaywalking across Davis Highway, we made our way against traffic to the Wendy’s on the other side. Upon entering, Cameran took a seat, and I ordered 2 double cheeseburger meals up at the counter. Carefully, I carried the food to the table where Cameran was using my phone to locate a GameStop. Finally figuring a good path, we began our discussion while stuffing our faces.

“The closest GameStop is the one at Cordova Mall,” Cameran said while biting into the burger like a shark attacking a seal. “That’s most likely the one that you had in mind, right?”

“That has to be it,” I said while inspecting my burger for unwanted condiments. “The name sounds familiar, too. So that’s more than likely the place.”

“Well, we’ll just call the Yellow Cab again and they’ll take us there.”

“I already told you, these cab passes don’t grow on trees. Besides, our destination doesn’t seem to be too far away. In all honesty, we could walk there.”

“Are you sure...? You already made one huge blunder today, and you’re setting yourself up for another one,” Cameran said as he sipped his drink. “Hey... you got me a root beer! My favorite!”

“I know. That’s what you always get,” I said while struggling to keep all the food in my mouth. “Anyway, I’m sorry that this happened. None of this ever would have happened if I had a car. But then, of course my mother had to go and pull out all the stops for me having a car my first semester. All probably because of some pent-up grudge she has because she didn’t have a car her first semester of college. Well, either way, it looks like a short walk. It won’t be too bad.”

Boy, was I wrong.

As we stepped out of the Wendy’s after finishing lunch, the sun shone like a merciless predator in the sky. Its uncaring, unfeeling rays beat down on the ground like a hail of torrid light. Cameran and I had to walk through the monstrosity of heat in order to reach our goal. As we walked under the brutal ball of flame in the sky, the sidewalk faded from in front of us. We were basically walking in the street, dodging cars as we crawled forward under the unforgiving sun. Things started to wind down as we began a walk through a wooded neighborhood, shading ourselves under the trees.

“Can we call the taxi now?” whined Cameran. “I’m pretty sure it will be cooler and faster inside a car.”

“No...” I moaned, while out of breath from the blazing heat. “I told you, we’ll waste money that way. It’s better to do it this way.”

Despite my protests, I felt at least 12 times more prone to the heat than Cameran, so if I had the will to carry on, he could carry on much, much further than me. With a renewed sense of spirit, I continued my advance in the sweltering summer heat.

Later on, after we escaped the snaking paths of the neighborhood, we came to a more urbanized area. Soaked in sweat, we made our way while being beaten down by the giant glowing eye of hell in the sky. The heat had destroyed most of my endurance long ago, but my sheer spirit kept me moving. We’d already made it at least halfway to Cordova Mall, so getting a cab at that point would’ve just be a pointless surrender. Still, we needed to fight the heat somehow, so we temporarily retreated to the nearby Tom Thumb station. A short while later, I emerged from the station wielding a mighty cherry Icee, and Cameran with (big surprise) a root beer. Brandishing our beverages, we charged onward through the unforgiving heat wave.

“We can’t be too far now!” I proclaimed, combating the heat with my trusty beverage. “We’ve been on this walk through hell for quite the time now, and our destination isn’t too far!”

We trudged on even further through the ungodly weather, and my hope was starting to wear thin. I had just drained most of the fluid from my Icee. The sun’s sinister rays were once again overpowering the pitiful endurance of my body. I was losing hope fast. In a last ditch effort, I could’ve poured the remainder of my beverage over my head, but finally a saving grace came from the heavens above.

“Hey, isn’t that Cordova Mall?” questioned Cameran, looking at the building in the distance.

Seeing the familiar place jogged my memory. That was it! Cordova Mall at last! Throwing everything that happened behind me, I rushed towards the mall without a care in the world. Plowing through the traffic like a charging rhinoceros, I was only looking at what was ahead of me, and caring not for whatever I was leaving behind.

“At last! Cordova Mall!!” As the door opened before us, the blast of cool air from indoors would have been enough to knock me off my feet. “We made it! After all of that hell it’s finally over!” I squealed with delight as I rolled around on the cold, tiled floor, basking in the feeling of my body being sufficiently cooled at long last.

“Get off of the floor, Sean.” Said Cameran, with a disgusted expression. “People are staring at you like you’re a maniac.”

After passing the onlookers, we arrived at the GameStop at long last. Downloading our special store exclusive content, we preordered the necessary games and went about some other stuff in the mall. Afterwards, I called another taxi and we both sat outside the mall. Cameran also took my phone and reviewed our recent escapade.

“... Five miles. We walked five miles! Five EFFing miles!!” Cameran sat there exploding at me in rage. “That is not something I was ever meant to walk! A five mile walk through an oven from hell! I hope you know whose fault this whole thing is!”

“Right...” I said with anger swelling in my gut. “It’s my mom’s for not letting me have a goddamn car!”

This is one mall trip Cameran will never let me forget.