

The Nihilist And The Carpenter

Blithering Genius

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A walrus and a carpenter were walking along the seashore one beautiful summer evening.

"We should take off our shoes so we can feel the sand between our toes." said the walrus.

"That's a fine idea, old friend." said the carpenter.

They took off their shoes and continued on their way, letting the waves wash over their feet. The carpenter was in a philosophical mood.

"What do you think about life, the universe, and everything?" he asked the walrus.

"I am a nihilist." said the walrus. "There is no purpose to life, no meaning to our existence, no truths that we can know, no values to guide us."

The carpenter thought about this for a few minutes. "But earlier," he said, "didn't you suggest that we go for this walk?"

"Yes," said the walrus. "That was my idea."

"And didn't you suggest that we take off our shoes?" asked the carpenter.

"Yes," said the walrus. "I thought it might be nice."

"How did you decide that we should do those things, instead of something else?" asked the carpenter.

"I just decided," said the walrus. "There's nothing unusual about that."

"But you are a nihilist!" said the carpenter. "You believe in nothing. If there are no values, how can you prefer one thing over another?"

"How can I not?" asked the walrus.

"I am confused." said the carpenter. "And here's something even more confusing. How did you decide to be a nihilist? What is your nihilism based on?"

"Nothing." said the walrus, and he grinned at the carpenter.

"Nothing?" said the carpenter.

"Yes, of course!" said the walrus, "It is based on nothing."

"But you must have chosen to be a nihilist for some reason!" said the carpenter.

"I suppose that is true." said the walrus.

"Aha!" said the carpenter. "So you believe that something is true."

"Of course!" said the walrus. "I believe that many things are true." He looked into the water. "There are oysters here." he said, "I believe in that." He plucked an oyster from the sea and sucked it out of its shell. "Delicious!" he exclaimed.

"I don't understand." said the carpenter. "You believe in nothing, yet you believe that there are oysters in the water. How is that possible? It is a contradiction!"

"Yes," said the walrus. "I believe in many contradictions." He licked his lips. "There are many oysters here." he said, gazing into the water.

"You can't believe in contradictions!" said the carpenter.

"Why not?" asked the walrus.

"It is irrational!" said the carpenter.

"But I am a nihilist." said the walrus. "I don't believe in rationality."

"Ahhhh. . ." said the carpenter, beginning to understand.

"Except when I do." said the walrus with a smile. He plucked another oyster from the sea and slurped it down.

The waves washed over their feet.