

A COMEDY SHOW AT THE END OF THE WORLD – STORY SYNOPSIS

In the final moments before the apocalypse, a TV sketch show airs a sketch called “Toilet Trump” in which Donald Trump has turned himself into a toilet. A particularly pointed news bulletin interrupts to announce that satirical comedy has failed to vanquish the world’s villains and that the end of the world is in progress, as the sketch’s performer, Johnny, listens powerlessly from the stage.

Years later, Johnny is a traveling comedian wandering a post-apocalyptic wasteland, set to perform a live comedy show in the settlement of New Garbagetown. Drawing on his “Before-Times” showbiz experience, Johnny puts on a show featuring a late night-style opening monologue, sketches from his past, games like the mail-in photo contest “Skeleton Of The Week” and the promised giveaway of a single unlabelled can of beans (which seems to be why a lot of people are there)

Over the course of the show, we learn about an upcoming election for local Warlord. Boneripper, the hyperviolent incumbent, is a frequent target of Johnny’s comedy for his corruption and bloodthirst. Johnny’s between-sketch banter also offers a sense of his own past; it’s revealed that he and his TV colleagues travelled together for a few years after the apocalypse performing shows on the road, but as the others gave it up and started building a settlement, Johnny felt he was still meant to do important things in comedy. Still believing “Toilet Trump” narrowly missed its chance to bring about full-scale social upheaval and determined to prove his ability to change the world through his art, Johnny left the community to strike out on his own – a decision he has been increasingly questioning.

While taking a break during the show’s musical act, Johnny is attacked and nearly killed by a group of Boneripper’s Bone Boys, who are forced to flee the scene before they can steal his beans. Johnny interprets the assault as a sign that he’s “pissing off the right people” and recommits to using political satire to take down the Warlord. In a state of angry delirium, he returns to smite all the evils of the world in a single comedic blow: A reimagined version of “Toilet Trump” with Boneripper swapped in as the target of the satire.

As the sketch concludes and his adrenaline fades, Johnny comes to a heartbreaking realization: “Toilet Trump” was a terrible sketch that was too meta for its own good and barely made a point, and the importance of it had become overinflated in his mind over the years. Johnny laments that the world has changed comedy into something to be wielded like a weapon, as opposed to a means of gathering and fun, as he half-heartedly performs the bean giveaway.

Just then, Boneripper and his forces lay siege to the show to punish Johnny for his blasphemous material, but when Boneripper discovers Johnny was behind the original “Toilet Trump” – the last thing he saw on TV before the apocalypse - the Warlord is overcome with nostalgia, sparing Johnny’s life out of the sheer glee of having a version of the sketch performed about him.

While the extent to which Johnny’s comedy effected social change is suspect, by the show’s end Johnny recognizes it has another value; an opportunity to find community and common ground, and moments of levity in a difficult world. However, his negligence does allow superintelligent racoons to steal an audience member’s car.