

I, Kannot

By Stanley Kelman Jr.

The Visionary

Kenny Kannot marches into the room like a prophet—or a scam artist—here to rewrite the laws of the universe. His beard, a cascade of misplaced wisdom, spills onto his chest, and a man bun perches atop his head, his self-proclaimed badge of rebellion against “the establishment.”

Dressed in a smock and sweatpants that only amplify his unkempt absurdity, he looks like an overweight garden gnome who’s recently discovered philosophy.

His sneakers, scuffed and peeling, speak of many miles walked but no destinations reached. His hands jitter, forever rolling invisible dice, gambling on the next big idea—one that will, of course, change the world. If only the world had the wisdom to listen.

He clears his throat dramatically, commanding the attention of his two bewildered coworkers.

The Gospel

“Kannot,” he begins, with a flourish of his hand, “is no ordinary name. Let me explain its meaning—it’s layered, like me. First: cannot. A word they use to limit us, a word dripping with oppression. ‘You cannot.’ ‘You shall not.’ ‘Don’t even try.’ But me? I am Kannot. I defy their fences.”

He paces the room, his scuffed sneakers squeaking with every step, before spinning around.

“Second, kannot—the Hebrew for seedlings. Shoots of potential, fragile yet unyielding. Like an idea breaking through the concrete of conformity!”

He pauses for dramatic effect, then leans forward, lowering his voice as if revealing a sacred truth. “And third, the pièce de résistance: kanòt—Haitian Creole for ‘canoe.’ A vessel. That’s me—a vessel of change, navigating the turbulent waters of mediocrity, carrying seedlings of revolution to every shore.”

Kenny grins, his eyes wild with conviction. “So yeah—Kannot. Three meanings. One destiny.” He straightens; chest puffed out as if delivering a prophecy.

“Kannot, like “cannot”. But watch me—”

“I’m a vessel,” he declares, arms outstretched, his scuffed sneakers squeaking against the tile like a hesitant exclamation point. “A canoe on the raging river of complacency! I plant seedlings of rebellion in the gardens of conformity. I—Kannot—am here to disrupt, dismantle, and disorient! You’ll see.”

His voice rises, his hands now conducting an invisible orchestra of upheaval. “They say cannot, I say Kannot. Because I will, even when I shouldn’t. Because I must, even when it doesn’t make sense!”

The crowd—or the two disinterested coworkers waiting for the meeting to start—watches in bemused silence.

Brandon, draped in a silken work shirt with rhinestone eyebrows and a freshly powdered jawline, sips from a bejeweled thermos, he raises one penciled brow.

“You’re exhausting, Kenny,” he drawls, voice like melted candle wax. “But at least you commit. That’s more than I can say for this meeting.”

The other coworker—a rail-thin man with the expression of someone halfway between enlightenment and sleep—squints at the clock. “Five minutes late,” he mutters. “Godot’s punctual, compared to this.”

Kenny's smock flutters dramatically as he pirouettes to drive his point home. "I am the Johnny Appleseed of thought! My seeds are ideas—wild, untamed, revolutionary! Some will grow into forests of change. Others..." He falters, looking momentarily unsure,

"...well, others might just be weeds. But weeds break through concrete, don't they?"

He thrusts a stapler into the air, his torch of defiance. "You doubt me now, but history will vindicate me! Today's heretic is tomorrow's hero. Mark my words: Kannot is not about limits. It's about possibilities!"

He lowers the stapler slowly, as if expecting applause. There is none. Just the buzz of old lights and the faint rustle of snack wrappers. Kenny straightens his smock, nodding like a dismissed prophet, and strides out of the room, sneakers squeaking a half-beat behind his conviction.

But as the door swings closed behind him, a different voice begins—the one he never performs.

It whispers not in defiance, but in doubt. Kannot. A name he does not own. A name misspelled at a port of entry when his grandparents named Kanon, who fled the Germans, clutching their past like a paper birthright. The U.S. immigration clerk gave them safety—and gave him a name that was never theirs.

Sometimes he wonders if that slip of the pen rewrote more than letters. If it marked him as other. If it carved a scar between who he is and who he might have been. The name feels like a costume stitched from loss: of language, of lineage, of self. He preaches reinvention, yes—but beneath every sermon lives a question he cannot answer.

Not yet.

So, he keeps talking. Because silence, to Kenny, is the sound of not belonging.

The Revolutionary

Kenny is the reformer of systems who can't organize his own laundry, the preacher of utopia who's always behind on rent. "Down with capitalism!" he bellows, pawning his mother's antique clock to fund another artisanal cold brew. He waxes poetic about "perfect socialism" between sips, his pile of FINAL NOTICE bills growing ever higher.

"Look," he insists, eyes wild with conviction, "people just don't get me. I'm an innovator.

A disruptor." And indeed, he disrupts—dinner parties, staff meetings, casual conversations—with half-baked rants about quantum communism and workplace anarchy.

His manifesto lives on pizza boxes and napkins pilfered from the breakroom, a kingdom of cardboard communism stacked high with the promises of a revolution that will never come.

Amid the pizza boxes and napkins, an actual idea glimmers—something oddly brilliant about a decentralized power grid of intellect driven by artificial intelligence. No one notices. Kenny spills soy sauce on it and repurposes the napkin for a haiku about socialism. Sometimes underlined three times. Sometimes circled like a secret. MindGig is more than an app. It's a prophecy. A future where learning is obsolete. Neural circuits will replace study. Everyone will know everything—no more classes, degrees, competition. For once, he won't be the dumbest guy in the room. He'll be... equal.

And if equal, why not exceptional?

The Carnival

The world is his stage, and Kenny is center spotlight, bathed in fluorescent office lighting as he brandishes a stapler like the torch of liberty. He marches forward, a one-man parade, to the carnival tune of his own delusions. His arsenal? Borrowed catchphrases, snippets of TED Talks half-watched while scrolling Twitter, and the boundless confidence of a toddler explaining quantum mechanics to a room of Nobel laureates. Once, he marched solo down 3rd Avenue with a sign that read “Ban Reality,” shouting, “Free the algorithms!” A child waved. Kenny bowed solemnly, convinced he’d sparked a movement. His troops are paper tigers; his banners, misspelled protest signs. “Down with mediocrity!” one cries. “Mediocrity,” corrects another.

And then there’s the bathroom incident. Kenny, ever the rebel, declares war on men’s room engineering. “Why should I stand? Why should I aim?” he challenges, glaring at the urinal like it’s a ceramic oppressor. He crouches awkwardly, splashing his manifesto onto the tile floor.

Victorious, he emerges with unwashed hands, a maverick who “just won’t play their game.” The janitor, sadly, remains unconvinced.

The Messiah

Kenny wears authenticity like a costume, swapping masks as needed: the intellectual, the maverick, the misunderstood genius. Beneath the bluster, he’s a hollow shrine to ambition without substance.

He talks “as if” he’s changing lives, leading movements, building empires. In reality, he’s rearranging paperclips on his desk, convincing himself it’s strategy, not stalling. His

confidence is a helium balloon, inflated to bursting, always one pinprick away from collapse.

Years ago: third grade. A presentation on clouds. Kenny froze. The class laughed. The teacher's silence echoed louder than any ridicule. Since then, he's talked to fill that silence. The child who couldn't find words became the man who couldn't stop producing them.

Each failure is just "a lesson." Each dismissal, "a test of resilience." Kenny is the eternal optimist, the emperor of imaginary victories. At 3 a.m., he stares into his reflection on the blank Zoom screen. "You were electric today," he tells himself. Then clicks away, just before tears might prove him wrong.

The Tragedy

We laugh at Kenny because we must. To confront his emptiness is to face our own. In his cracked mirror, we see the fragile masks we wear, the delusions we cling to.

Kenny Kannot will never stop. Not because he doesn't see the truth, but because stopping would mean admitting the truth was never his to begin with.

So, here's to Kenny: the fool, the fraud, the prophet of punchlines nobody asked for. His name, once a misprint, now a monument. A single misplaced "o" carrying generations of reinvention—and delusion. He's the hero of his own story, and if you don't believe it, well, you're just not ready for the revolution.

The Singularity in the Gig Economy

The van lurches forward, a mechanical groan, its tires a symphony of despair against pitted asphalt. "Another mile," Kenny Kannot mutters, the words curling through the stale cab air,

“another sordid chapter in my Sisyphean saga. Behold, the modern world's solution to inefficiency—me, a philosopher-king trapped in a fluorescent vest, reduced to ferrying trinkets and trifles to the desperate and the degenerate.”

His hands grip the wheel like a gladiator's blade; knuckles pale with righteous indignation. The sandwich in his lap—a soggy, limp albatross, a crime against both his palate and dignity—sits heavy, steeped in yesterday's mustard and the existential weight of every poor choice that led him to this cursed route. Behind him, the packages are stacked in neat rows, each one labeled with a barcode and an unspoken possibility.

A crooked stop sign looms ahead, a bent relic of order in a world that has forgotten it. Kenny laughs—a single, derisive bark. “What fools these people be,” he says to no one, the phrase swelling with all the borrowed grandeur of a mind convinced it is wasted on its time. The van groans its agreement—or perhaps it protests; either way, he takes it as cosmic solidarity. “This van,” he declares, slapping the dashboard with a hollow thud, “is my ark. These streets? My seas. The world doesn't know it yet, but I'm not just delivering packages—I'm delivering a new tomorrow.”

Each stop feels like a duel, every squeak of his scuffed sneakers on a driveway the sound of rebellion. He hefts a box onto his shoulder like it's Excalibur. “Today, I slay complacency,” he mutters, leaving a package labeled *fragile* on a doorstep. The front door stays closed. He salutes it anyway, a knight errant acknowledging his unworthy opponent.

“Too much sanity may be madness,” he says softly, climbing back into the driver's seat and gripping the wheel as if it were a lance. “And maddest of all: to see life as it is, and not as it should be.”

The GPS application interrupts with a cold, flat tone. “Arrived at destination,” it declares,

indifferent to the grandiosity of his visions. Kenny stares at the beige monolith ahead, the kind of building that seems to apologize for existing. He steps from the van with all the solemnity of a monk bearing holy writ. A box rests in his hands, its label smudged with rain and indifference.

For a moment, he considers leaving it there on the stoop, an offering to the void. The door opens, a creak that mirrors his soul. Behind it, a man in a wheelchair, his gaze a dull and watery mirror. Kenny resists the creeping shadow of pity, for what is pity but the tool of the weak. “No,” he thinks, “I am not here to feel. I am here to deliver.” The box changes hands; the door closes. The moment is over, and yet its weight lingers, an echo that hums with the van’s tired engine.

The Weight

Back on the road, the van becomes a cocoon of solitude, unbothered and unseen—exactly as he’d designed it. Solitude wasn’t a symptom; it was strategy. A fortress against the world’s disbelief. The dashboard bears its own scars: receipts, crumbs, an ancient coffee stain that forms a map to nowhere. Kenny’s breath fogs the windshield, blurring the line between the world outside and the universe inside his mind. “This is the price of greatness,” he whispers, unwrapping a granola bar with reverence. The foil crinkles loudly in the silence, a metallic hymn to perseverance.

He scans the horizon like it owes him something. “Do they understand the martyrdom of my existence?” he asks the windshield. “Do they see the tragedy in these roads I traverse, lined with mediocrity and waste? I am the last noble soul in this city of frauds, dragged down by the gears of a society too ignorant to recognize my genius.”

The packages in the back shift with each bump, a cargo of false promises swaddled in cardboard. Kenny laughs again, louder this time. “A rebellion born in absurdity is still a rebellion,” he declares. He glances at a garden gnome perched in a yard; its plaster smile frozen in time staring into eternity. “You get it,” he says, nodding solemnly. The gnome offers no reply, but Kenny feels its silent endorsement.

Another stop. Another door. Another transaction stripped of meaning. The cycle repeats, but Kenny Kannot, unyielding in his delusions of grandeur, presses on. For in his mind, he is no mere delivery driver. He is a crusader, a reluctant hero wandering the asphalt labyrinth of a world too broken to deserve him.

By nightfall, his knees ache from climbing too many porch steps. His shoulders sag under the weight of boxes and ideas. At a red light, he grabs a discarded packing slip and scribbles furiously: *MindGig. An app for truth. Delivered to your door.* He pictures himself in a boardroom, presenting the concept to investors. They’ll laugh at first, but his conviction will win them over.

He’ll leave that room a legend.

As he steps out of the van for the final time, he pauses. The Singularity is not yet near enough—not in the depot, not on the horizon—but he feels its presence, nonetheless. It is not yet visible to the unenlightened, but Kenny can hear it: ideas slicing through the night air with a phantom hum only he can sense.

“Not today,” he whispers, gripping the scanner like a sword hilt. “But soon.”

“Tomorrow,” he says aloud, climbing back into the van— “Tomorrow, we charge.”

The depot lights buzz like a thousand unsung prophecies. Somewhere, in one of those packages waiting to be loaded, lies the revolution. He's sure of it. Kenny lifts his chin, staring into the fluorescent abyss.

The engine sputters to life, coughing like a reluctant oracle. As he pulls out into the rain, the windshield wipers tap a rhythm of quiet defiance. The headlights cut through the darkness. Somewhere ahead, the Singularity waits.

The check engine light comes on—flashing furiously red.