

Great Guy's Decision

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Sirens wail. Car horns shout. Damsels make other noises of distress. The Wellington Sleepwalkers Support Group had been left unsupervised and exposed to too much chamomile tea, the five of them promptly falling asleep and wandering out onto the train tracks. A freight train carrying the capital's supply of coffee beans is hurtling towards them — perhaps not fast enough to reach them anytime soon but faster than the usual public transport system. Fast enough to do more damage than even Mt Vic Tunnel does to pedestrians' ears.

The conductor rings out a desperate warning, but the gentle ch-ch ch-ch of the train simply soothes the hostages in their sleep. Only public servants are close enough to help, but they're still organising a meeting time to plan out how to save them. The brake of the train has stopped working for a third and equally implausible reason. They could not be saved! The situation was nonsensical and even slightly far-fetched!

This was a job for... Great Guy! (duh-duhduh-duh!)

Introducing Wellington's very own superhero. Great Guy is on the list of local legends, right up there with George Wilder and Cuba Street's sax playing Tree. Rumour has it that one day, he drank so many flat whites the caffeine propelled him into the air, granting him his powers.

He flies faster than the fish-and-chip-hunting seagulls of Oriental Parade, is stronger than the wind battered trees up Mt Kaukau. He owns a brand of hairspray — Great Guy's Gust Repellent: Protecting Your Hair from the Wind and Your Hind from the Forces of Evil. His cheekbones are as sharp as the Ngauranga Gorge, his teeth as white as the pigeon populated awnings on Manners. He's even published a book of Wellington's top 100 cheese scones (number 27 will shock you).

He says thank you to his bus driver ("the city's true heroes"), shows dislike only towards Aucklanders, and always indicates out of roundabouts. He is, simply, a great guy, and people love him for it.

Now, come to the rescue yet again, Great Guy zips through the air before landing heavily on the roof of the train station. He wobbles, but only because no landing in Wellington is a smooth one.

“I’ll save you!” he announces as heroically as the Black Ferns on their way to save New Zealand rugby. There is a gruesome thud as a swooning maiden hits the footpath. With an arm outstretched like the Evans Bay Needle, he powers back into the air and whistles past the in awe onlookers.

“Oh, think, think! What to do? What to do?” He mutters to himself, weaving through the air. He cannot move the sleepwalkers off the track — that would wake them. Everyone knew you could not wake a sleepwalker for an unknown reason that was definitely valid and vital because everyone knew of it.

That left the train, but it cannot be stopped. Great Guy was strong, but turning against coffee — the source of his power — would stop his powers in their entirety. He would be crushed along with the sleepwalkers.

“I have to divert the train to another track!” Great Guy decides, his cape whistling in the wind.

“Yes,” the wind whistles back, “but divert the train *where?*”

Great Guy spins around, somersaulting through the sky. He is met with empty air. “Hello?”

“*Hello?*” the wind cackles, Great Guy’s least favourite Hurricane.

“Who goes there?”

“Who blows there?” the wind mocks him.

“What do you *want?*”

“To talk to you about what you are going *to do,*” Wellington’s wind whispers, solemn.

“I am going to divert the train!” Great Guy announces again, his voice whipped away towards the harbour before it can echo.

“Yes. But to *where*?”

Great Guy peers down, down, down. He hadn’t realised how high he had floated. The clouds are cold on his ears. His nose is running. From this high up, the train looks like it’s barely moving at all. Between the freight and the sleepwalkers is only one fork in the track.

“Look *closer*.” Great Guy swears the voice is behind his ear. He leans forward, towards the ground, before flying back again in shock. There, on the second track, lies a single figure. An overly committed media student, filming their last dramatic shot for their Wild West film. Having thought they were safe, they had tied themselves to the track.

“*What*,” whispers the wind, “are you going *to do*?”

“I,” Great Guy whispers back, “don’t know.”

“Divert the train, kill the student? Or do nothing, and watch as the five sleepwalkers die?”

The wind is surrounding him now.

“I... I can save them both. I am Great Guy. I am extraordinary...”

“You are. It gives you a decision. There is no power without that.” The wind circles tighter.

“So, what are you going *to do*?”

“I want to help!” Great Guy cries. “That’s all!”

“And that,” the wind sighs, “is the most ordinary thing of them all.”

There is a beat of silence too heavy for this high up in the air.

“So,” the wind asks one final time, “what are you going *to do*?”