

Adorable Annie, The Idiot Cowboy, and The Three-Legged Dawg

by [Paul H. Yarbrough](#) (August 2023)



Dog Barking at the Moon, Joan Miró, 1926

There was this little gal across the river in Memphis who was as pretty as brand new un-dried paint, and as sweet as a can of ant poison, but she could spit up mischief like you ain't never seen when she set her little mind to it.

Her name was Annie and some way or 'other she got the nickname "Adorable" attached to her given name way back when she was just a darlin' little pixie in day school long about the fourth grade. Some said she was carrying one of them Case pocket knives to school and had sliced a' extra button hole in the shirt of her boyfrien' 'cause she told him he was so *adorable* that he needed a buttonhole, in case he ever got a boutonniere. Ain't nobody livin' ever confirmed the story but, from 'bout the fourth grade, she was known as Adorable Annie.

Now one of her generous little qualities in addition to being pretty, precious and good with a knife was that she loved dawgs. And that's how I got to know this little gal. I was visitin' a friend over in Arkansas looking for a new bird dawg and he not only sold me one but put me in touch with Adorable Annie on account of she was always lookin' for homes for some of the little canine fellows.

I didn't really have need for no new dawgs but out of courtesy I giv' her a call long distance and she said she had a sweet little three-legged bulldawg that just needed the right owner. And she said she had heard about my reputation for kindness towards dawgs in my care, so this little bulldawg would be just what I need for companionship, since bird dawgs was mostly working dawgs and wasn't much on lovin' and such. Besides, she said, she knew a fellow in my business would be a natural caregiver. I dig holes for septic tanks by the way. Actually, I'll dig a hole for most anything 'cept buryin' deads routinely, so septic tanks is my big-ticket item.

And I have had a customer or two combine the two-deads and septic tanks. One fellow I had gone to high school with had his mother-in-law die when she was hit by lightning while she was pickin' apples.

It turned out he and his gal needed a new septic tank at the same time, so I giv 'em a discount for only diggin' a single hole. And with so many dandelions growing in their back yard

there wasn't no problem providing flower arrangements.

But mostly, right now, I was wonderin' 'bout gatherin' a three-legged dawg of any kind into my care.

And I wondered which leg? Which leg would be the best to be a missin'? I mean, that is if you had to own a three-legged dawg. I had a cousin once who had a three-legged frog. He had wanted keep it for jumpin' contests at the County Fair but after it got too close to the river one day a gator snipped off a hind leg and all it could do was jump 'round in circles after that what with two legs on the same side and all. So, I figured leg locality might be important on a dog, too.

So, I drove over across the river and up to her house where she was settin' out on the porch gnawing on some jerky she held in one hand, and also a can of Falstaff beer in the other. She swallowed the last bite of jerky, crushed the beer can, chunked it in a bucket that was near bout full of crushed cans anyhow, and waved a real flirty little wave.

"Hidey. You must be that cowboy feller who roots around in septic tanks?" She got up out of her lawn chair that had "*Property of Panama Beach, Beach,*" printed on the back, spit across the railing and walked out to greet me.

"Yes Ma'am. My name is Harlan Schumacher, but ever'body calls me The Idiot Cowboy."

"They call you what? The—the Idiot Cowboy?"

I shoulda noticed at the time that her sparklin' little eyes took on a extra twinkle when she heard my name had "Idiot" attached to it. And, I thought there might be a *wicked* little smile hidden amongst all that beauty. I had to admit she was a *looker*. And her flirty little hand-wave got me a bit excited.

"Yessum. Before I got into raw sewage care and maintenance and so forth, I was a rodeo clown. My friends said I'd have to be

an idiot to do that, but it paid pretty good so I took it on as a career. And some way or 'nother the name just followed me in life."

We turned around and she started leading me up to the porch, ever' now and then scratchin' her behind as if she mighta had fleas or something—like some mongrel spaniel. I suspected just a rash, maybe. But I didn't comment. I thought that was probably one of them Emily Post rules or whatever—not to ever ask a lady why she was scratchin' her behind. So, I kept mute on that subject.

"Well, now Mr. Idiot Cowboy I got a dear friend—name's Marrsha—that's Marrsha with three "Rs," who got this bulldawg who need a home. And they can't find nobody to take it in on account of his three-legged problem. People git skittish when it comes to three-legged dawgs."

I heard her say something 'bout dawgs but my mind hadn't cleared out the bidness 'bout her friend's name havin' so dang many "Rs" in it. This was a strange little gal for someone named "Adorable." And it sounded like she had some pretty strange friends, too. "Well, now I didn't know there was so many dawgs around that was three-legged."

"Oh yeah. Over here in Tennessee we got a bunch. A whole bunch. But down in Mississippi they got em by the store load."

"Well, I declare! I never heard that."

"Well, over there in ... where is that? Texas? You from Texas?"

"Yessum."

"I'll bet y'all got plenty. I'll just bet y'all do."

'Fore I could tell her much about Texas she had got to carrying on about her friend with all the "Rs" in her name and she was bringing the dawg over for me to rescue. We hadn't been hardly discussin' it more'n about ten minutes when

Marrsha drove up in her fifteen-year-old Edsel, skidded to a halt in the gravel driveway and jumped out like Jimmy Johnny at a NASCAR event.

“Hidey, Adorable, how you been?” She said it like it was a cheer.

She had one of them smiles that matched her friend Adorable’s. Her hair was in one of them rope-long ponytails and she was wearing Levi’s and a tee-shirt, and what must have been an enormous brassier size considering how top heavy she appeared. She sported a tattoo of Elvis on one forearm and a fine replication of what appeared to be Lord Falstaff on the other. She also appeared to be the sort of gal that a fellow could git hustled by in a game of nine-ball. On the back of her tee-shirt was printed *Nashville Nudist Society*.

I felt as if I had wandered into the land of the *peculiar*.

“Hidey, Marrsha. How you doing? This is Mr. Schumacher. But he wants you to call him an idiot.”

“No Ma’am. Not just *an* idiot. That’s ‘Idiot Cowboy’,” I corrected her, though I hope I had not offended her.

“I see,” Marrsha said. “We’ll how do you do Mr. Idiot Cowboy? I’m Marrsha.”

“Well howdy do Miss Marrsha,” I said as polite as I had been trained.

She stepped right up to me, her enormous bulging brassier pressing my chest, and put one finger on one of my jawbone cheeks and her thumb on the other and squeezed a bit. “No, no, Idiot, that’s Marrsha. MaRRRsha. It got three “Rs”.

“Yessum–yessum. I thought that’s what I said.” I tried again, making sure I was clearly trying. “MaRRRRRRsha!” I jus’ prayed I got ‘em all in there.

"Well," she said, "I'll reckon that'll have to do."

"Yessum. And try to remember, please Ma'am, I'm not just an idiot. My name is Idiot Cowboy." I wanted to stand my ground.

Adorable stepped over closer to her and with her wicked little smile said, "Did you bring Bozo?"

Marrsha pointed at her Edsel. "He'd in the back seat. Just waiting for a new Momma or Daddy."

I tried to explain that I was just here as a favor to a bird dawg friend and I didn't really need a 'nother dawg, let alone a three-legged one. But as it worked out that little Adorable Annie and her friend with all the "Rs" and the huge boobs talked me into taking the dawg and paying them \$100.00 to cover their humane expenses. I can tell you, that little Adorable Annie wasn't only a looker she was a smooth-talkin' little heifer, too.

But I just wanted to get outta that nutty place and I was willing to even rescue some pore misbegotten dawg if I needed to. So, you can imagine my shock and awe when Bozo popped outta the back seat onto the grass with Marrsha holding him by the leash. He wasn't no three-legged dawg. Even a blind man could see he had all four of them natural dawg legs.

"Well here's y'all's hundred dollars. Can I keep this leash?" Actually, it was just a rope from some old Venetian blinds, but I thought they may have had some use for it—like strangling chickens or something.

"Oh, dang! For sure," Adorable said. She took the hundred dollars and stuffed it into her quite exciting, I would say, as I had noticed, *cleavage*. "Oh, Marrsah, you might wanna git him them knee-length rubber boots that goes with the deal."

"Whada I need rubber knee boots for," I said. I seemed like I was to git mystified no matter what they said.

Bout that time, Marrsha had let Bozo free of the leash and he ran right over and lifted his leg and give my britches leg a good soaking with bulldawg juice.

“What the hell is going on!” You can imagine my well-placed testiness.

Adorable stepped over and handed me the boots. “Here, wear these from now on. You act like you ain’t never seen a three-legged dawg—”

“This one got four,” I yelled.

Adorable dropped a light beer-belch, then spoke. “Yeah, but these three-legged ones learn at the early do-ings that they is standing on only three legs. So, they got to find a fourth one and get close to it til they’s done.”

She smiled (that little wicked smile) then batted them cute little eyes at me and said, “Bye-bye, now, Mr. Idiot.”

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