

## **I left my body lying somewhere by eugen**

**music:** 3 Doors Down "Kryptonite"

Due to the weather up here, I decided to spend some time inside with my son. His daycare was out for the week for a teacher's conference, and it's cheaper than hiring a severely dressed British woman with an umbrella to watch him. Besides, it's not like I go into work more than once a month anyway.

What would a daycare center discuss at such conferences, anyway? Which brand of milk is best? Whether to get Crayola or RoseArt? The rising price of cookies?

My brother had gotten me an invite into a secret meeting of marketers in 2010, a reality sim. Except that this reality had ugly ten-story statues of furies in it. With genitalia the size of a semi-detached flat. Nonetheless, it was growing rapidly, and '20conferencing' was increasingly being used in lieu of teleconferencing. Which was why my quiet avatar was breaking bread with several other avatars that all had spiky hair and obscure band t-shirts. When I rezzed, the subject had just turned from virals to use the inherent dramatic potential of fandom.

"Well, I think fandom's a little broad," said some guy with a goatee. The sim identified him as 'Jacques Seven'. "It's the Internet, itself, that has the power to disseminate catfights and the like like nothing before. We just need to get our foot in the door."

"It's remarkably hard," said Jacques Five. I wondered where he had gotten the virtual coffee from. "The best we've been able to do is ARGs and virals, and the last one hasn't done so well. No offense," he nodded at Jacques Three.

"None taken. We shouldn't have registered it in our name, anyway."

"I think you're looking at it all wrong," said Jacques Zero. His avatar was literally a zero. "We don't need to fake it, we need to harness it. Point it in the right direction and let it take off by itself."

"But how?" someone asked.

"Sounds to me like you need to create something in the real world that'll spill over into the Internet," said Jacques Seventeen, over by the coffee machine. "Like, I dunno, someone asking for an iPod because theirs was eaten by their burned cat or something."

"What about creating a fake to be exposed?" said Jacques Three. "Or a fake so good one can't tell it's fake?"

There was a brief pause, during which I got a cup of coffee from the machine on the side of the room.

"Like faking a death?"

"No, that takes too much money. What about mental afflictions?"

"Everyone on the Internet already has Asperger's."

"I mean like amnesia."

"How do you fake amnesia?"

I was only half listening, since the market was going up and down and I had a macro set to log everything anyway. With my left hand, I tapped out the command to drink coffee while my right tried to buy Nintendo stock, which was nearly impossible to find. Not that I drink coffee; everyone was doing it. Like wearing a black turtleneck in Starbucks, or acting like I write slashfic when I comment on Fandom\_Wank.

Over by the virtual coffee machine for my second cup, I found myself waiting in line behind a fat guy wearing a flannel shirt over a geek culture tee. He had dark hair, and his appearance was carefully crafted to give the impression that He Was Better Than You. He hadn't seemed too interested in the proceedings, except when he gave his own suggestions or criticized those of another.

"Scott Kurtz?" I asked.

"Who?"

Just then, Jonn started crying back in reality. I logged out and attended to my sweet prince. Apparently, it was of grave importance that I fetch his teddy. He couldn't reach it through the playpen mesh, mystifyingly, which prompted me to ask why he threw it out in the first place. He glowered at me, clutched the toy tightly and kept his own council.


I decided that I should get mobile, and broke out the laptop, only to find myself entering a totally abandoned room.

"What happened here?" I asked the janitor.

"Meeting broke up," he said, roughly.

"Why does a virtual meeting need a janitor?"

His eyes widened slightly, and he de-rezzed. Curiouser and curiouser.

I wouldn't have given it a second thought but for the wank a few days later. Some fanfic writer named The Girl With the Broken Smile  had posted her furry slashfic to some Sangunity comm. Something involving lesbians and cyborg penises; I wasn't really paying any attention to anything other than the location of the freeze button on the few dozen threads the post spawned. And the followup post after that one was frozen. And the post she got 'a friend' to make after she

was banned. The marketing link came in after she 'got in a car accident' days later, and used a Sony Ericsson W810 to voicepost about it on her journal. Everyone knew what phone she used because she specifically mentioned which phone she used, and how easy it was to use the interface and find the voicepost number she had apparently stored on it.

"The *frick*?" I said to my empty house. The cat looked at me sidelong.

Also, she seemed to have selective amnesia, which, oddly, only affected a few scattered things, like how to make omlettes, and more importantly her memories of anything she had ever done on LJ, including her fics, participation in any comms, and how it worked. As a result, she would be rereading all of her fic and commenting on it as someone who had never even heard of furry, much less fanfiction, much less cyborg lesbians.

When my neighbour came out to garden a few minutes later, he found a man in a jacket staring at the sky with a bemused look on his face, a man with an aquiline nose and noble profile. Would a poet had been nearby, to be struck by the contemplation which graced his kingly features. What thoughts weighed heavily on his brow? they would wonder.

"Hidey-ho, neighbour," he said.

I glanced over at him. "That's a rake." Beat. "Do you believe in God?"

Collins looked at me in exactly the same way the cat had. "Depends on what game's on on Sunday."

"Do you think there could be something so perfect, so complete, that the only explanation for its existence is that some benevolent being loves you and created it just for you?"

"Have you seen my wife?"

"That's not what I meant. I mean, like something that will create reactions and counter-reactions for you to study for a very, very long time?"

"Like being married?"


I paused.


"Yes, like being married. Thank you for your time."


"Any way I can help, Lenny."

Back inside, I found that there was already wank brewing. The rapidly growing part of the fandom who knew about the situation had divided, like some sort of monocellular organism, into two parts. One part metaphorically threw itself in front of her and yelled 'DON'T DO IT!', immediately followed by a series of reasons why she wouldn't like the story she had written. The other side thought this would be an excellent chance to examine the affect context had on one's

interpretation of a given work, and how much of it was innate, and nature v. nurture, and otherphilosobabble. There were, of course, a few extra electrons\* that egged her on solely to see her reaction, much like a serpent advising her to eat an apple. "Do it," they whispered, coiling seductively around her lithe body. Eve, a bandage about her head, contemplates the red fruit. "It will make you *wise*."

I check  [fentthink](#), to see what kind of pretentious speechifyin' they were gettin' up to. Nothing particularly bad, not yet. Back in my comm, the wank machine was winding up, its well-worn parts squeaking. Aside from the furies asking other members to refrain from furbashing. That reminded me to check the [LOL Internets](#) wiki, and found that the story was so weird that it had been bounced from the story hosts of all but the darkest Furry. Even the cyborg fetishists didn't want it, or the Sonic fans. Any of them. It's like saying flies wouldn't eat roadkill; unnatural and unsettling.

On the  [ph elete](#)[sic], a community for people interested in the dual academias of philosophy and psychology. Someone bought up the Faber-Epstein theory, and I smiled, remembering that little caper. Several of thecomm's members cheerfully jumped at the oppourtunity to share their thoughts on furry cyborg yuri . Few caught on that it was biologically impossible, at least as she described it. What would a 'lubricant bridge' be made of? Why didn't they just grow cyber-penises or something? Alas, these thoughts were left unanswered, except for the few who misinterpreted the question completely, and promised they would write porn and get back to the poster, with hilarious results.

My involvement was limited to a few thread-freezings(I like to dominate my members, to see them driven before me, and to hear the lamentations in their capslocks.), warnings, bans, and pointing out a few things in  [ded from li](#), though this little drama was a little outside their purview. I had carefully checked that I had no connection withImmaz; no sense repeating that incident with Mara. Even [Fandom\\_Wank](#) seemed a little taken aback. It was like someone had decided to hold a "Zombie Pride" parade in the parking lot of a chainsaw store.

Something about this was wrong, I thought, pulling the mayo out of the fridge. I'm in a virtual meeting about using fandom trends for benefit, then a short time later, a girl is in a car accident and ends up obsessed with a cell phone and causes all sort of wank before even posting her first entry. Her story is, as far as everyone can tell, airtight. The kind of perfection only money can buy.

"Shenanigans," I informed my son. He nodded gravely, tapped his spoon on the high chair thoughtfully, and smeared applesauce on my nose.

Of course, Hanlon's and Occam's Razors both implied that the cigar was just a cigar, and she was probably just telling the truth.

Then she posted her first review.

She had read chapter one of "Age of Steel"(oh sweet heaven no) from the Ericsson, and had found it largely wanting. Her grammar needed work, and she would advise herself to work

especially on her conjunctions. She also needed to work on how the characters felt about what they were doing to each other. All in all, she would give her sophomore fanfic a 3...out of 5.

"Yet she doesn't even mention the cyborgs in pseudo-Elizabethan times." I said aloud. Jonn gurgled his agreement.

Wait.

Sophomore.

It took me a few seconds to access the LI page and find the `External Links` at the bottom; the page was on Rabotic.org.

Oh.

Oh snap.

Rabotic was a pit of scum and villany, unequaled by even /b/. The extreme insularity of their...interest led to some sort of strange combination of what could charitably be called intellectual masturbation, and the aforementioned /b/. There were long diatribes in the front page about how robotics were the future of humanity, how self-awaredly pretentious they were, drugs, and latex. I wasn't sure what latex had to do with robots, but frankly, I didn't want to.

Her stories had been well received there-which was inevitable-and I could see how she would lead herself to think that she would be well received by a wider audience. What time was it. The clock in to top right of my screen said it was only mid-afternoon on the same day. Kind of like 24. I'm not sure what kind of terrori-

*Beep.*

The alert flashed amber.

My head hit the desk with a soft *bonk*.

"Hull /b/reach." I said.

Immaz had conveniently locked the commenting on her journal, leaving the communities discussing her to bear the brunt of the /b/ attack. Since there were several threads on my own comm, that meant that I had to lockdown everything. Great. I spent an hour and some cleaning up the mess the /b/tards had made, and surveyed the damage. In the eight hours since her accident, Immaz had become the hottest thing since Batgirl. Digg, blogs, Wikipedia, Del.icio.us, even Reddit , all of them had her up. I was relieved to see that I wasn't the only cynical one; several of the Diggers were suspicious of her repeated mentions of the phone, though how they managed to turn that into bashing the PS3 I have no idea.

Several other subwanks were formed, some surprising ones. She was surprisingly, championed

by several feminist comms, something about trying to keep a good girl down. The word "prejudism" was used, only for the commenters to respond that the word did not mean what she thought it meant.

All in all, it was a good day for lulz, and I had just finished closing up shop and retiring to the couch with a bag of chips, my son and *The Most of S.J. Perelman* when my wife arrived.

"You're late," I said.

"Sorry," said Mara, dropping her bags. "I had to cover for one of the after-school teachers. She was in another state paying a visit to her niece who got got in a car accident."

My head snapped around like I was Kirstie Alley catching wind of a hamburger. "What?"

My wife shucked her jacket and shoes, and plopped into my lap. Jonn spared us a glance, then resumed watching Nickelodeon. "It was really weird, too. Some SUV full of advertising executives came out of nowhere and slammed into her Kia." She wriggled around to a better snuggle position. "Aside from the physical damage, all that happened was her losing random bits of memory, except for everything she had ever done on Livejournal, and becoming *really* attached to her phone. Some sort of Ericsson W-something. Pass the chips."

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[Mina made me do it.](#)

Tags: [fiction](#), [t3h\\_poker](#)

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