



t3h_poker: "something simple, something sleazy" by euqen

music: OK GO-"Here It Goes Again"


The whole thing started when some well-meaning fangirl posted a fic somewhere featuring the original character of BNF PrinceC. The character had somehow been drawn to the loins of the fangirl's Mary Sue, and the canon chars were all but negligible, only briefly mentioned.

It's funny how the smallest things can cause wank.

PrinceC himself, according to one post on some LJ community, was furious. Another post, elsewhere, stated that he was "quite enthralled by the seamless merging of canon and fanon" and felt "honored" to have his creations used in this way. They were both proved liars when PrinceC himself posted on his LJ, stating that he was absolutely neutral on the subject. Both posts, and their wanky debates, vanished almost immediately, but not before being 'capped and posted on Fandom Wank. The commenters seemed absolutely baffled by the fact that there even *was* a debate, most contributing some variant of "who cares"?

In between advising my clients on which stocks to buy, buy, buy, and sell, sell, sell, I found myself drawn into a debate with a . She kept going on and on about the "sanctity of canon" and "respect for the creator" and other self-contradicting bull. I had stopped arguing a long time ago, really, and was now just trying to see which buttons I could push. (My username,  should've been a tipoff.) This got boring after a while, and I decided to try something new.

After a quick check to confirm that our Mara was the original poster, I added one final post arguing against her, with the tagline "You shouldn't delete people's comments." I then went back and deleted most of my previous comments, leaving the last few. Then I switched to Opera, where my mod account was permanently logged in, and froze the whole thread. I went back and gave it the once-ov-crap.

There, right *there*. I had mentioned that her mother's favorite color had been violet. The problem was, she had only mentioned that to people on her friendslist. The only people who knew were either on that list, or knew her personally.  was neither. I bit my lip, left it, and went to change my son's diaper.

A few minutes later, just as I was taking the gloves of the HazMat suit off, I heard my wife come in. "Hi honey!" I said brightly, kissing her on the cheek.

"Hi," she returned, shedding her coat. "You smell like diapers."

"It's Jonn," I grinned ruefully. "What have you been feeding him?" She slugged me on the arm; I had been making that joke since we agreed that she would be the teacher, and I would be the stay-at-home dad. It wasn't a bad arrangement, really. Jonn amused himself, and that left plenty of time for Internets and doing some light trading.

Speaking of which...

Oh, that Leo. That Ian. That Largo.

I'm not sure when or how I stumbled upon *Sangunity*, but it hooked me instantly. I had always been interested in swords and the supernatural in High School—like any well-adjusted teenager—and even took a fencing class in college. I stopped after I nearly got myself killed doing so. It's all a blur now; something involving a \$20 bet and some orange juice. I'm not sure when I decided that it was best to use one journal for my personal LJ and commenting on friends' LJs (this was the one on Mara's list), one for communities, and a third for mod stuff. It had worked pretty well, until now.

Some time after making my daily webcomic rounds—oh Alton, oh Rachel's boobs—I got back to the computer, leaving M. curled up with her laptop and an apple on the couch. The roast wouldn't be ready for an hour or so. I put in the password to clear the screensaver, and, on a hunch, checked Mara's personal LJ on my account friended there. As the kids say, it had been hitting the fan.

Mara had been subdividing her friendslist into custom groups and making posts designed to lure out the "traitor" who had leaked information to t3h_poker. Anyone who expressed the slightest dissent was immediately banned. Several had been banned even before she had started her "great purge", because they "couldn't be trusted". I made a mental note to be more careful in the future, and checked my GMail, trying to banish the image of a two hundred fifty-pound woman pecking at an amber-lit keyboard in a fetid bedsit, while a henpecked husband shivers in a filthy corner. *Please, he begs her, won't you think of the children?*

You'd think that would've been the end of it. That she would eventually run out of steam. But no. There was a bright and sparkly post on Fandom_Wank a few days later; Mara had pissed off some really, really egocentric BNF(👤) by defriending her, who had taken it upon herself to set her fangirl army upon every fic, every post, every public scrap of text Mara had ever posted online.

I blinked.

Mara, I recalled, lived somewhere in my area, and had a husband and son. Her mother had died roughly the same time as my wife's, who had also liked violet. She had some unspecified job in the education system, and I was worried that if one, just *one*, of the fangirls worked in her school, she could be in terrible danger. To that end, I tried to resolve the situation; I posted on the Alucara's LJ as T_P, explaining that Mara's paranoia was my fault, with the exception of the names of my sockpuppets and the mod thing.

Miiiistake.

Alucara, in a remarkable stroke of lateral thinking, publicly declared that Mara had used "coersion" to force an innocent LJer into a false confession. The thread where I semi-confessed was hidden from public view, for my benefit, of course. Fantastic. Now Mara had both Alucara's fangirls and the general e-public against her. Fandom_Wank and Mara were both in hysterics. I

felt terrible.

I hadn't *planned* any of this. I had just wanted to look good online. And now, as I watched her steadily dwindling amount of friends, I realized that I had effectively ruined this woman's electronic life. For the next week or so, anyway.

In Internet time, that's forever.

Now the mental image was of that of the same large woman, in a filthy duster, caked with brown near the bottom, openign her scraggle-toothed mouth and making a noise that's a cross between an elephant's trumpet and a vacuum starting up. The computer monitor is rocked back slightly, and the wallpaper starts to peel. Somehow, she triggers the answering machine, whose last message informs her that she's lost her job. She nods, briefly, and returns to the terminal. The husband is nowhere to be found, presumably left after bringing her what appears to be fried chicken. From what seems to be chicken bones, hopefully.

I sighed, put down the dueling pistol I had been cleaning, and checked on my wife. Coincidentally, she was on Livejournal. I had already taken my contacts out, and without them I couldn't see anything past my nose, but some of the brightly colored squares next to the usernames seemed familiar. Funny, she never gave me her username.

"Ihm gohonna tuph Honn en," I said through a mouthful of Colgate. "Night."

"Night," she said distractedly. She looked sad, somehow. I kissed her on the cheek.

I was just settling in for the first 18 minutes of Conan when I realized that I had left my computer on, and the gun out. I found my wife at my desk, with her laptop, her hands typing furiously on the two keyboards, eyes darting between screens. My question died on my lips; I had left Gmail open, and the screen saver took about twenty minutes to activate. If she had come up soon after I left her—

Why was my mouth so dry?

"Honey," I began, about to pass this off as a joke, a prank, *anything*. She turned towards me, eyes red-rimmed, and I saw her own email on the laptop, with a LiveJournal notification of one of—
no—

It was one of my comments to Mara.

M. Charlotte Lennox. Mara Charlotte Beehaven-Lennox.

Mara *Miss-Beehaven*.

The family, the mother, the job-how did I miss it?

"I—"

We just *stood* there—

"It's just the Internet," I said, lamely.

The pistol was between us on the desk.

We looked at each other—

And then we both reached for the gun—

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