

D10 Inverse Muse

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A work of fiction, meant for adults. Read something else if you are not an adult, or are offended by stories with sexual content. Then again, if all you're looking for is in-out, in-out, in-out, you should probably read something else. I welcome constructive comments. Enjoy.

In my office at home, minding my own business, not really working on a story. If I'm not going to write, I can atone for past sins and edit older stuff.

And that's when I got the eerie feeling that I wasn't alone... I turned slowly in my chair.

Behind me, hovering a foot or so above the laser printer were two characters -- reminded me of Gidney and Cloyd from *Rocky and Bullwinkle* -- roundish heads, small bodies, about three feet tall, no visible noses or mouths, cheesy moustaches worse than mine, greenish complexion with bluish spots.

And both were pointing things at me that had that unmistakable *weapon* feel -- that air of, "Feeling lucky, punk?"

"Hmmm," sez me, turning slowly to the keyboard again. Clickety-click: *I* may have hallucinations, but I'm pretty sure my webcam is clean.

"Wouldn't do that if I were you!" a high-pitched nasal voice sing-songed behind me.

I turned around, hand on the mouse. How can you have a nasal voice without a nose? Or a voice without a visible mouth, for that matter?

I started a frame-grab from the camera.

The left one's weapon-ish thing went "zzzzzt!"

I looked around; my webcam now resembled a smoking pickle with a cable jammed into the back.

I turned once more to my uninvited guests.

"Now was that nice?" I asked them.

The one on the right raised its looking weapon-ish thing, and with the corners of his (its?) moustache going up in what seemed to be a smile, giggled, "Nope!" in an overly cheerful voice, with an attitude of, "Care for two out of three?"

“You’ve got my attention. What can I do for you?” I asked, leaning back in my chair and putting my hands behind my head. “Make yourselves comfortable.”

The one on the left crossed his (spindly) legs, still in mid-air. The one on the right pivoted and slowly turned upside-down, but the smile seemed to remain stationary -- was he upset now?

“We don’t like the way one of your stories is going,” the one on the left said, gesturing with his pickler.

“Not at all,” agreed his companion, shaking his head seriously side to side.

“Okay, *which* story?” I asked.

“*You* know which one,” the upside-down one sing-songed.

I thought about it. No, don’t think it’s that one, or that. Thought about one in my just started pile, one I sketched out two days earlier...

Both of them nodded. “That’s the one,” both sing-songed in anharmonious agreement.

“Okay, and what do you suggest?”

“We suggest you apply your talents to *another* story line,” the left one said.

The one on the right nodded. His head turned counter-clockwise while his body went clockwise until he was once again rightside-up.

“Why? What’s in it for me?” I pushed my luck.

The right one pointed his gadget at my computer. “Oh, I was hoping you’d say something like that!” He giggled, and I didn’t like that giggle one bit.

But his compatriot said, “Not yet -- he was just asking a question.”

“Thank you. Do I get an answer?”

“What are you going to do about the story?” leftie asked.

“With your permission, I’ll delete it, permanently, right now, and promise not to work on it again,” I offered.

They looked at each other. Leftie said, “Go ahead.”

I turned and did things slowly, explaining as I went. The file securely deleted, I turned to my “guests” once again.

“What about his arrrrrchives,” the character on the right said in his singsong voice, pointing his gadget at my computer, and then the drawer with my backups.

I shook my head. “I haven’t done a backup since I started that story.” My last backup was four days ago.

“Even betterrrrr!” the one on the right giggled, and “zzzzzt!” went his pickler at my backup drawer!

“Hey!” I shouted.

He giggled and pointed at the clock on the wall. “Zzzzt!”

“Stop it!” I shouted. Even his greenish cohort looked concerned, and reached for him.

But he kept giggling and pointed at my laser printer.

“Knock it off!” I shouted again.

He giggled and pointed the thing at *me*. “Zzzzt!”

I woke up on the floor, feeling like I’d been kicked by an electric mule. “Gah!” I exclaimed to nobody in particular, moving to all-fours.

My printer was intact. Not so the clock on the wall -- I’d made it from an old 8” hard disk platter. It looked melted, very Salvador Dali.

“Oh shit,” I muttered, turning around and looking under the desk at my computer.

I had a dual processor G5. Had -- past tense. What sat in its place now was an old scruffy looking wooden box of approximately G5 dimensions, bound with old rusty bailing wire. “You bastards,” I muttered.

What about my laptop? I segregate work and non-work stuff, and the MacBook I used for work was still in my bag in the hallway. I crawled on all fours, not sure about standing up just yet. My legs still tingled. Hell, all of me still tingled.

MacBook was okay. Some good news. But what had he done to my backups? One wall of the office is floor to ceiling bookcases and storage, with a drawer in each section. The drawer in one section I use for backups, another for discs that come with things. When I write a backup (on CD or DVD), I label it, put it in an envelope, and toss it in the backup drawer. Quarterly or thereabouts I parse and prune the contents of the backup drawer.

Crawled back into the office, up on my knees, opening the backup drawer and looking inside. "Man, that's cold..." I muttered, looking at a drawer full of AOL CDs. No, mixed with the AOL CDs were a few copies of Queen's Christmas Album. "Nasty..."

I closed the drawer and sat back on my ass, leaning against the lower cabinet.

Well... I glanced at the top of the desk. My external firewire drives still looked intact; they're what I used for system backups. Have to check 'em out on the laptop to be sure.

That feeling again -- I turned and there was the greenish non-shooter floating about a meter up in the air.

"What do *you* want?" I asked.

"He shouldn't have done that," he singsonged in a sad tone.

"No shit," I agreed.

He pulled a small box from somewhere; it was four inches on a side, with a gold ribbon around it forming a bow on top. He tossed it to me. "With our apologies."

And with a pop, he disappeared.

"Thanks, I think, and stay gone," I muttered. I shook the box. It rattled. Do I want to give it a short ride in the microwave before opening?

What the hell... I took off the bow and the top of the box. A small velvet jewelry bag. I pulled it out by the little cord.

Exposing a mob of metallic spiders underneath, spiders that scrambled out on to my hands! I shook my hands, trying to fling them away. One landed on my left thigh. Ouch! It bit or stung me! Ouch again -- my right forearm! I tried to brush that one away as I felt the pain in my left thigh turn to cold. My left side, left shoulder, then a searing pain in my neck on the right side, searing pain turning to cold buzzing sweeping into my head.

Not a good night, I thought as I pulled myself up off the floor yet again. The damn spider things were nowhere to be seen. I could see the mark on my right forearm, like a sting. I felt my neck; another bump. I'd never been entirely out of it, but then I hadn't been entirely with it, either, as the damn things stung me a dozen times or more.

I moved a bit and almost lost it. I did *not* feel well! A wave of nausea rolled through me, and my sordid past strongly suggested I didn't have a lot of time. I made it to the downstairs bathroom, flipping up the toilet seat and lid and woofing up my dinner.

After a few rounds, I felt a little better, or so I thought. I made it to my feet, wobbling at the sink washing my face and rinsing my mouth out.

“Oh no...” Not good -- I stepped out of the bathroom into the hall and hit the buttons on the thermostat on the wall, turning up the heat and telling the thermostat to hold at 74F. I wobbled back to the bathroom and stripped. It was going to be a long, long night! I flipped down the toilet seat and sat, the first wave of cramps hitting as the forced air furnace kicked on to try and keep me warm.

I spent the night in the downstairs bathroom, mostly in the tub, spewing from one or both ends, occasionally rinsing myself and the tub down.

My head was pounding, and I was cold when I woke up, light streaming in through the window.

I turned on the shower, got the water good and hot, and washed myself and the tub down once more. I did it from a sitting position. I was shaking and wobbly, but I was alive, and feeling somewhat better. As I dried off, noting puncture marks in various spots, I also noticed it was 9:45 in the morning. My, how time flies when you're having fun! The last time I'd had an episode like that had been in Cambodia on a holiday, and it had been my own damn fault, eating food from a questionable street vendor.

I made it to the kitchen and had some toast and a glass of Sprite; both stayed down. I also called in to work and let folks know I was out sick for the day. I sat in the kitchen for a while, recovering. Had another piece of toast. My head wasn't pounding as much, and I'd know in thirty minutes or so if what I'd eaten was going to stay with me. Damn, what a trip!

I peered cautiously into the office. No sign of the spiders; hope I see them before they see me! The little box was still on the floor, the little bag close by. My fried clock was still on the wall, the drawer full of AOL and Queen discs partially open, and that damn wooden box where my dual G5 used to be. I checked the release disc drawer; contents looked intact, as did the other things I checked in the bookcases. Grabbed my MacBook so I could check the firewire disks.

Recovering but tired; I plopped my weary ass down in the office chair. “Little green bastards,” I mumbled as I opened my MacBook and dug for a firewire cable. I did a quick scan of the drives; looks like I've got intact backups, so I only lost a day's worth of miscellaneous stuff. And the cost of a new machine, you little green...

Oh -- the little jewelry bag! What about that?

I was feeling wasted. Looking at the stuff way down there on the floor, the easiest thing to do was go down on all fours again, pick up the stuff, and crawl to the family room so I could crash on the couch.

I slept for an hour or so, waking more refreshed. Yeah, like I'd been beaten a few days ago, rather than last night. An improvement anyway. Opening the little jewelry bag revealed a credit card, or was it a gift card, with my name on it! I looked at the card, picked up the phone,

and had a short conversation with the 888 number listed on the back. Hadn't gotten one of these before, what's the story? It's mine, use it anywhere you use a credit card, and the balance is 18888.88! Thanks! That solves my computer problem!

The little jewelry bag? Dumped the contents onto the coffee table. A small green-and-gold earring reminiscent of one of my visitor's heads, and a very pretty green gemstone -- emerald? -- on a silver chain. Held the emerald up on the end of the chain; it sparkled very nicely in the light. Lots of detail, lots of sparkles in that stone. Nice.

Okay, I put that back in the little bag. Did I want to wear the earring? Why not? I felt my left earlobe; I'd slept (in the tub) with an earring in all night, not something I usually do. Gee, two somethings I don't usually do -- sleep in the tub, and sleep wearing an earring! I took out the one I was wearing, a small yin/yang symbol, and replaced it with my tormentor's head. Yeah, that's a good way to think about it.

A peanut butter jelly sandwich and some soda later, I was feeling more stable. Stable enough to drive to the local Apple store? One way to find out!

About 45 minutes later I walked out of the Apple store, almost five grand lighter. Be back in another 45 minutes and they'd have the memory and wireless goodies installed in my new dual quad core beast. Then I'd go to Fry's and buy disk drives. I had a hot chocolate, and walked around. Looked in the Montblanc store. Even though I use fountain pens, and had free money, I couldn't justify spending that much on a fountain pen.

A friendly Apple store gal with blue streaks in her hair hauled the good sized box out to my mini and helped me load it in the back. From there it was over to Fry's, where I bought three disk drives. Then home to have fun!

The old wire-bound wooden crate was heavy! I took it to the garage before unloading the new box from my car. Dropped in the new disk drives, connected it to the usual stuff, and powered it up. Very fast! Formatted and named the new drives, then connected up the firewire drives with my backups and started migrating things to the new box. That would take a while.

I fixed and had dinner while the new box got populated. There were a bunch of little things I needed to do by hand, upgrading programs, re-installing python hacks, reauthorizing iTunes to play my purchased music. But when I went to bed that night (early), I had a much faster computer.

Looking at the character in the mirror, toothpaste foam around his mouth. Not getting any younger, or any better looking... The earring glistened in the light. Rinsed my mouth and reached to remove the earring, part of my nightly routine.

Except a pair of singsong voices called out, "Not a good idea!"

I didn't see anything in the mirror except for the idiot who was usually there. I turned around and looked just to be sure. I seemed to be alone...

I also seemed to be tired. Enough of this for one day.

Crashing in bed, my head buzzing, eyes jerking behind closed lids. Focus on that sensation at the tip of the nostril and breathe...

Flopping around with two characters rummaging through my mind? Twitching as one says, "Look what I found!" the other says, "Leave that alone!" then "Ooh, this needs to be fixed!" and, "Move it over here."

I sat up in bed. "Knock it off!" I said out loud. I *thought* I was awake... "Knock it off or the earring goes down the loo!" I threatened.

Got up and sat on aforementioned loo. Bathroom clock says one thirty in the morning. Elbows on knees, head in hands.

"We're sorry," an apologetic voice singsongs in my head.

I finished my business and collapse in bed once more.

FIN
2009/08/28

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