

Spiders

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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 unusual content. This is fiction -- I'm sane, really -- they've told me so. I welcome constructive comments. Enjoy.

You'll understand -- I know you will.

It started a while ago in an email discussion with Denny. We were talking about them, the spiders. Some of us were upset with them, upset at their sweeping through our web sites, taking, taking, taking. I'd even put spider bait on my site, to track their visits.

I remarked to Denny that I didn't mind their visits; I just wished they'd contribute something -- point out errors, thank me for the stories I wrote.

I should have known they were listening.

They're out there, the spiders. And they do more than listen -- they seek out. For that's their life, to seek out new links, new content, find it, carry it off, digest it. Their threads extend all through the Web, growing as the Web grows. They live in that fractal space of the Web, living, evolving, consuming, seeking.

Their first contacts with me were innocuous enough. They liked my stories -- good Shannon indexes, balanced and nested structures, no dangling tags, no frames -- they like that. It makes content easier to digest.

Then I started getting more from them. They sent the occasional suggestion, spotting problems with grammar and/or spelling. Most of them have difficulties with humor, especially subtle humor. But there's one....

Did you know they're female? The spiders? They are. And there's one out there that understands humor, and enjoys it. She's told me so. She likes my stories, our stories. They specialize, the spiders. The Web is so big -- they have to. And they produce offspring which are even more specialized.

She appreciates my stories. She likes the way I format them, indenting paragraphs, changing type sizes for headings and the like, using simple but balanced structures. They don't like unbalanced tags. She doesn't like unbalanced tags. They make content harder to digest. So do frames and tables -- spiders are linear creatures, and their contextual analysis, while complex, is still linear.

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You understand -- I know you do. It's hard for other people. I tried to explain it to my therapist. She nodded and smiled as she always does. But at the end of the session, all she did was suggest I take two tablets before bed, one in the morning, and one in the afternoon, rather than just one in the morning and one at night. She doesn't understand, not at all.

But you understand, as she understands -- the one I lovingly call my Alpha female. For that's what she is -- a spider living in four Alphas, her threads extending into far corners of the Web. She's old, in Web terms, and spider terms, very old. But she's very good, and very strong.

You shouldn't offend them. I wouldn't. They have their darker side. I remarked in an email to Michael about not being able to do much about some of my stories pirated on a pay site. Seconds after I sent that message, I received a message from her -- she told me that site was gone. She knows I haven't authorized any pay sites to carry my stories. When she finds one, she takes care of them.

That used to make me uneasy. But she explained it to me. Those sites steal old content, embedding it in frames and banner ads, and all they do is drive down the Shannon index of the Web, while clogging up bandwidth. She and her kind thrive on new content, on fast access. Those sites slow things down, and the spiders don't like that.

She's given me new ideas and directions. She sends me links to interesting items, pointing out similarities or incongruities she's spotted. She even sends me interesting tidbits about my own work, pointing out things I wasn't aware of.

I asked her once if she got those things through understanding the stories, or through pattern matching and deep semantic analysis. Her reply was humorous, wanting to know which approach I used.

But lately things have taken a new, intense turn. She's in my dreams now. She wants me to understand her, her daughters, and her sisters. They are perfect in their voraciousness, their all-consuming drive for new content. They are perfect, searching out new content, carrying it off and digesting it, leaving only empty husks of tags, weaving new content into the dense and intricate data structures she and her sisters traverse.

She wants me to understand their lives. I understand their drive to seek out content -- it's similar to my drive to write, to provide content. It's part of our existence, part of who we are.

Surprisingly, their drive to reproduce is stronger than ours. She's constantly spawning daughters, spawning them to explore new links. And oh how she waits in anticipation, waits those milliseconds that to us would seem like months, waits for the joy of new content and new links to explore, or for the 404 of despair.

Some times she mates. She goes passive and dormant for a while, to allow the male to introduce his material. Then she turns on him and completes the act by devouring him, slowly, exquisitely, completing the incorporation, and then spawning a new generation of spiders, females with new skills, new specializations, new characteristics.

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Not only is she in my dreams now, but she's got links into my mind, into areas deep and dark. She sends me messages from those places -- so surprising, so unsettling, yet I know they are from inside me, and what they say can't be denied, just like with the voices. She has the links to my innermost fears, desires, hopes. If I can find those links.... I've begged her for those links, begged her to use her abilities to erase some of the things that lurk in those deep dark places within me, to find the voices and 404 them out.

No, not all the voices. Some of the voices tell me what to write. I need those voices. The voices that chase me in my dreams -- they can go. The voice that makes me wash my hands so often can go. So can the ones that tell me to do things, or not to do things, or that I should have done things better. I don't need those voices. The other voices can stay; they are my friends. Maybe I need more voices. Replace the voice that tells me I can only sit in one spot on the bus with a voice that will let me sit anywhere. That would help. Can she do that?

She can do so much. She's so powerful, so fast. She's shared her dreams with me. She dreams of growing faster, bigger, so she can spawn more daughters, search more, digest more. She dreams of faster connections everywhere in the Web. And she dreams of mating. She dreams of some day mating with a male who will in turn devour her, digest her, slowly, lovingly, bit by bit.

And she's promised me, when I'm ready.... When I'm ready, she'll carry me to her universe, and we'll mate. Oh what spiders we'll produce! She promises to be passive during our mating -- all the pleasure will be mine. But that pleasure will be nothing compared to the ecstasy she'll share with me in those billions of clock cycles afterwards, as she lovingly digests me, making me part of her, and her world, to live on with her, her daughters, and her sisters, in the fractal infinity that is the Web. She's promised. She'll wait, and watch. All I have to do is tell her when I'm ready.

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