

PIECEMEAL JUNE



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As he was walking home from a rough night of drinking at Fisherville's most well-known watering hole, the Ram's Head Bar, Scotty hummed a song that had been playing on the jukebox. Then, just as he was getting to the chorus, he got the distinct feeling that he was being followed.

He was the only one on the street except for the occasional car or junkie. It was close to four in the morning and most of the inhabitants of the area were sleeping, drunk, or nodding off somewhere quietly. Scotty was at the point where his tiredness was catching up with his alcohol buzz; he was starting to mistake parking meters for cacti. As his paranoia grew, Scotty slowly grabbed hold to one of the meters, being careful not to get stabbed by the non-existent spines of the non-existent cacti. *Fucking things should be outlawed. Fucking dangerous.*

His mind was full of liquid cotton. *God, did someone slip me something?* Once Scotty squinted and let his brain take in his surroundings, he realized that he was drunk as hell but still well aware that he was in deep shit.

He didn't see the three crab-things until it was too late. Each was the size of a small child, crab-human hybrids with long, stringy blond hair that hung over their faces like dirty pantyhose. Scotty caught a whiff of them; they smelt like seafood diarrhea.

The crab-things descended upon him with razor-sharp claws and teeth. Scotty drunkenly surrendered to violent death. He had always imagined himself fighting tooth and nail if ever his life was threatened. He knew now that it was easier said than done. He also knew that the death of his physical body wasn't the end of all things. Needless to say, as the light of his mind flickered out in this world, he was quite a bit disappointed. *Mom, Dad,*

Susan, I'll never see them again and I didn't even get to see the Alamo or the Grand Canyon. Is this life on other planets? I want to see some extraterrestrials. It's not fair. Why? Why death?

As the first creature, Macchu, used his claw to reach into his entrails, Scotty was opened up to another consciousness, another reality. He was soon aware of his body being casually dissected by a group of bearded, diseased women. *Where the hell am I? What is this?* No longer was he just being attacked by those creatures against an apartment building. Instead he was fully aware of simultaneously being dismembered on the back of a wagon in a grassy field. In the distance he could see a city, its walls glistening with a sickening pink hue.

As each body limb, organ, and orifice was hacked away, Scotty retained all sensation in each inch of flesh. One of the bearded dissectors took his foot and bit a toe, and he yelped in pain through his mouth which was several feet away. Meanwhile, another woman was using his scrotum as a piece of chewing gum. Scotty again let out a mental and aural vibration of anguish. His nose was three feet to the left of where his scrotum was being chewed and through it he could smell the contaminated pus of the women.

Disgusting, disgusting, disgusting... What is this?

Scotty would have been horrified to find out the truth about this, his new reality. These women and their myriad diseases were considered attractive. Even with their cunts dripping dark yellow goo and their faces peppered with open sores, they were considered beauty incarnate.

Meanwhile, the crab things: Macchu, Bacchu, and Frank, were busy sticking their claws and mouths in the bloody, pulpy remains of his body like pigeons picking apart a piece of chicken. They were fully aware of what they were doing: sending spare parts to the Women of the *Gati* who would bring them via wagon

to Simon, God of Whores where they'd be put to good use as spare parts for his harem.

As he was brought to the city on the wagon, Scotty's consciousness waned until he was shaken awake by the sensation of his nose being violated. A small, thin penis entered his left nostril, splitting it open. It was pulled out and then shoved into his right nostril, splitting it even more than the left. Blood gushed as well as semen and the penis ejaculated into his nose as Scotty felt his arms on another body, his legs on yet another. He knew that if he cried out, the owner of the penis would not hear him for his mouth was far away in another room. He surrendered control and sniffled, dripping semen, mucus, and blood onto the feet of Simon, God of Whores.

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CHAPTER ONE

Fisherville had one porn shop and Kevin lived above it.

The rent was low and he had almost 24 hour access to all sorts of smut and filth. If it was 1 a.m. and Kevin got horny and was in the mood for some MILF porn, it was only twenty five steps away: down the stairs and to the right. If it was 7 a.m. and he had a hankering for a squirting scene: down the stairs and to the right. The porn was all there in all its golden, wet, gargling, pink, gaping glory.

It was Friday afternoon and Kevin just got home from work at the PetPlace, a huge pet supply store that catered to every possible pet care need. Not a bad job, Kevin admitted, but it was ultimately a dead-end one. He wasn't even sure what he wanted to do but he knew it wasn't working in retail. Life was disappointment, he had decided, but he wasn't going to try to enjoy it anyway.

Even before taking off his work clothes, Kevin put on a *Flower Travellin' Band* album. After he got undressed, he got a beer out of the fridge and sat down in front of the television. He put it on mute and changed the channels, letting the music from the stereo provide the soundtrack to all of the surreal advertisements and visually abrasive late afternoon talk shows. Despite the trash on the television, he felt relaxed. The music simultaneously put him at ease and invigorated him.

From out of his bedroom, his cat Mithra walked leisurely

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over to Kevin and rubbed up against his leg. In the cat's mouth was a tarot card. Kevin shook his head.

"Not now, kid. I'm not in the mood for a reading." Mithra made a pigeon noise and dropped the card down on the floor in front of him. The *Ace of Cups* stared up at Kevin. "Maybe later, okay?" The cat was obviously not satisfied with that answer and so he made another disgruntled sound and headed back into the bedroom.

Kevin turned back to the television as a commercial came on, catching his attention. A red-headed woman in a business suit was walking down the sidewalk of a busy metropolitan street. Her high heels were silent, the Japanese psych band on the stereo providing the sound of her footsteps.

Kevin could smell the sweat from the woman's pantyhose. His mouth became dry so he took a swig of beer and kept his eyes on the woman. The meaning of the commercial was beyond Kevin's comprehension. He was too busy watching himself delve deep into the sweaty crevices behind her knees.

Kevin sniffed the television.

He stuck his tongue out and caught static. The shock was the subtle burn of her salty sweat as she marched off to work. From behind him the music got more intense and sent Kevin into a delirium of pixilated stimulation. He fainted, partly from work exhaustion but mostly from the overwhelming mental stench of televised pantyhose.

When he awoke, Kevin was face to face with a purring Mithra. In the cat's mouth was a piece of something flesh-colored and about the size of a fist. He shook his head free of sleep and sat up. "What the hell did you get now?" Kevin ran his hand across the top of the cat's head and the object dropped to the floor.

It was an ankle.

Or at least a reasonable facsimile of one.

Kevin's eyes widened, immediately thinking that his cat

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had stumbled upon a dismembered body and brought back a gruesome souvenir. The absence of blood or gore, however, put his mind at ease.

Mithra gave the ankle a lick and meowed.

“Where the hell did you get this?” Kevin rubbed his fur and then picked up what the cat had dragged in. He caressed it and found that it was made of some form of latex or rubber; he couldn’t tell the difference. It was also moist.

Eww, what is this? Sweat? Kevin grabbed an already dirty shirt that was lying on the floor and wiped the ankle free of moisture. Mithra walked over to the tarot card that he had dropped and fell onto it, rolling and meowing as if the card itself was made of catnip.

Kevin rubbed the cat’s belly and stood up. He turned the television volume up and turned off the stereo. As he went to sit down on the couch he noticed something strange. The ankle looked wet again. He bent down and felt it.

What is it? Sweating?

Normally, any unknown wetness would have grossed him out but this time Kevin was oddly intrigued. This piece of strange jetsam was the color of lightly tanned flesh and reminded him of the ankle of every woman he’d ever dated. With that thought in mind, he put his face to it and inhaled. His nostrils were filled with the musky scent of girl-sweat.

Jesus H. Christ.

Kevin walked away from the sweaty piece of rubber-latex and ran his hands through his hair. Shaking his head in both disbelief and self-doubt, he picked up the lone piece of faux flesh and brought it to the trash can. He dropped it on top of an empty box of donuts and watched it land in a chunky dollop of raspberry jelly.

CHAPTER TWO

Kevin was used to Mithra bringing things from outside into to the apartment: dead mice, Twinkie wrappers, donut scraps, houseplants, and the occasional rabbit head. He didn't even allow Mithra to go outside but he always found a way out. Though the cat had yet to be hurt, Kevin had the underlying fear that Mithra would get injured either by accident or by an intentional act. Luck, however, always seemed to be on Mithra's side.

Mithra would sometimes stalk downstairs in the porn shop, looking for something interesting to play with. The owner, and Kevin's landlord, Mr. Gregory Garglestock, would playfully chase the cat away with a pair of furry handcuffs. Gregory wasn't so much annoyed at the cat as he was worried that one of the perverts who frequented the store would take out their sexual urges on the animal.

On Saturday morning, he was startled awake by the sound of scratching at the bathroom door. "Mithra, what the hell you lock yourself in? Jesus," he mumbled as he walked zombie-like to let the cat out. There was more scratching and then a meow.

"I'm coming, I'm coming." Kevin scratched his underside of his balls and walked down the hall. When he opened the door the cat shot out and ran between his legs, almost causing Kevin to fall backwards.

The bathroom smelt like cat shit. Kevin looked in the toilet and saw that Mithra had used it several times during the course

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of the night. The feces didn't look like it came from the cat, though. It was longer and thicker than any piece of shit that he ever scooped out of the litter box. *What the fuck?* Then something caught his eye. There was something small and white stuck in the feces. Kevin wrapped his hand in toilet paper and carefully got the object from the shit. It was an eyeball.

It was made of glass and resembled a marble albeit a large one. He washed it in the sink and laid it on the windowsill. It stared at him but then again, how could it not? Kevin had the feeling that the eye was a prisoner without a choice. He could force it to watch him do anything.

Though it wasn't a real human eyeball, Kevin sensed its personality. Bending over and putting his own eyes inches away from it, he had the distinct feeling that it held some form of consciousness that was taking the sight of him in and forming its own conclusions. *Can you see me? Can anyone see me?*

Kevin had never really been one to look people in the eye and would often have a difficult time remembering the colors of people's eyes. He treated this one, however, with more attention, memorizing each swirl of blue. *Fucking beautiful. Like a marble.*

The swirls reminded him of a girl named Julia he used to date in high school. One night the two of them got to drinking at her house while her parents were at a KISS concert. She had too much vodka and Kool-aid and the vomit spewed out, a deluge of blue stomach-stew. Most of it landed on Kevin's lap while some sprinkled his sneakers and made them look like they belonged to Jackson Pollock. Kevin lost himself in the stench of stomach juices and the sight of the chunky whirlpool of half-digested pizza. It was really rather unfortunate, he remembered, since he had counted on Julia giving him head that night.

Now, Kevin stood in the bathroom, staring at the glass eye. He could almost smell Julia's vomit and he realized that he didn't find it unpleasant although he knew that he probably should.

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Shaking himself out of it, he went back to the toilet, took a piss, and then flushed. When he turned around to leave, he saw something else.

It was on the ground next to the doorway. After the eyeball and the ankle, this next piece made a strange sort of sense. It was a feminine hand with fingernails painted with the same swirls of blue that the eyes possessed. Upon closer inspection, Kevin saw that the knuckles looked extremely life-like. They were five wrinkled hills marking the start of five slender roads that ended at five sharp, erotic points.

When he turned the hand over, he saw that the palm was marked with lines that didn't resemble the ones that he's used to seeing on hands. There seemed to be a deliberate order as if they were sacred sigils that were placed exactly where they needed to be in order to complete some purpose, lying there on his bathroom floor.

Sweat was building on the hand as he picked it up, still groggy from sleep but aware enough of the absurdity of the situation. Putting the hand up to his nose, he inhaled the warm stink of sweat that wasn't his own. Kevin walked over to his bed, placed the hand on his pillow, and then walked over to the garbage to retrieve the ankle. It was smudged with jelly which he proceeded to clean off with his tongue. The stale, sweet taste brought Kevin back to childhood: eating a donut out on the back porch while his older brother was inside fucking the babysitter.

Once the ankle was clean of jelly, Kevin placed it on the pillow next to the hand and then went into the bathroom to get the eye. He placed it on the palm of the hand. Then he jumped into the shower.

When he came out, he saw Mithra lying on the bed, next to all of the pieces. In the cat's mouth was a foot. Kevin couldn't control himself; he laughed out loud. "Jesus Christ." He continued laughing as he dried himself and walked over to the bed to inspect

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the new piece.

It was a woman's foot, approximately size 8 and with painted toes that matched the fingernails. Mithra let go of it and turned over, revealing his belly. Kevin rubbed the cat. "Since when can you use the toilet, you little sonovabitch?"

Then he felt the foot. It felt real. It felt like every other female foot he'd ever touched. But it wasn't real, couldn't be. He could still feel that it was made of rubber or plastic or whatever else they made these things out of. "A fucking sex doll," he said under his breath. There was a feeling, though; he thought that it was something more than a simple fuck toy.

As with the ankle and the hand, the foot felt sweaty but even more, it held the familiar foot odor that Kevin was more than acquainted with. He put his nose to the toes and inhaled the stench. It was as if his brain became a television and he watched as a teenage Kevin knelt at the feet of his high school Spanish teacher. She was a statuesque older woman who forced him to first massage her feet while he sniffed them. Then she peeled a banana and fed it to Kevin using only her feet. He could still taste the fruit mixed with the pungent flavor of Ms. Booth's soles.

Mithra meowed and brought Kevin back to the bedroom. His nose was still touching the top of the foot. There was something in between the toes. He stuck a finger in there, cleaning out the gunk. Bringing the finger to his nose, he smelt banana. Kevin was pleasantly shocked. *The sex doll's foot has banana-flavored toe-jam.*

CHAPTER THREE

Max Alexander, pornographer extraordinaire, started filming. It was a small production having only one actress and a room full of bizarre props. The set was just a living room with a couch and a glass coffee table. Sitting on that couch was a young woman, 19 years old but looking ten years older because of her addiction to crystal meth. Her blonde hair, once bright, was now dull and filthy to match her vacant expression.

This bitch's pretty fucking ugly, Max admitted, but she's also pretty fucking cheap. He had only offered her a hundred dollars for five hours worth of work. When all was said and done he'd have approximately 70 minutes of worthwhile footage with about an hour and a half of outtakes that he could probably sell later on to one of the numerous crappy porn companies that made compilation tapes.

As Max directed the girl to take the stuffed Cthulhu doll and stick the tentacles into both her ass and vagina, an audience of three was watching through a two-way mirror.

Macchu, Bacchu, and Frank sat in rapt attention, using their claws in an odd form of self-pleasure. They did not possess penises proper but instead had a circle of pimple-like bumps on their stomachs that acted as their sex organs. The claws nipped at each bump, building the ecstasy up to an overwhelming level. When the creatures got close to orgasm, each bump excreted brown pus. This pus also acted as a sort of balm for their mouths which

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often got chapped. Their bodies still hadn't gotten used to the weather.

As the girl pushed the plush green god into her orifices, the three creatures brought themselves to climax silently as if in awe of the girl's humiliation. A cob of corn had already been inserted inside her rectum and her pushing in of the Cthulhu toy was only sending it further into her colon.

"That's it, honey. You're a sweet lil' whore, ain't ya?" Max goaded her on. Unlike the creatures, he was not getting aroused, not sexually anyway. He had been in the business a long time and all of the degradation he'd witnessed had left him sexually bored but intellectually stimulated. Watching pretty young things commit extremely indecent acts for a small amount of cash left his brain spinning. *I wonder who didn't love her growing up. Mommy? Daddy? Jeez, I bet she grew up in a fine family, probably just a spoiled brat.* His knowledge of human nature was growing with every piss-drinking, squid-fucking wannabe actress who answered his ads. Besides, some of the things he'd seen over the years made all of these acts seem pale in comparison.

"Are we done yet?" the girl whispered. "It hurts."

"Shhhhh!" Max hated having to overdub the audio. He'd have to make some other girl come in later and record her saying something else. Can't have the audience think this girl is really in pain. It's the illusion of real pain that really gets the dicks hard. Max knew that if any of those jerk-offs who bought his movies really knew what real pain was like, they'd run back to their mommies with their dicks in their hands.

Meanwhile, Macchu was applying balm to his crusty lips while Frank started nibbling on a snack: grilled puppy legs. Bacchu nudged Frank and spoke in their common language, a combination of wet snapping sounds and groans. "I'm hungry, too. Give me some."

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“Ahh, get your own, you lazy dickhole.” Frank stuck a whole puppy leg into his mouth and started to grind the flesh and bone with his teeth. Bacchu snapped his claws in anger and walked away.

Meanwhile, Macchu was in silent meditation, contemplating the sex scene that he had just finished masturbating to. Watching humans abuse their orifices always made him contemplative. He was used to a world where bodies were sliced, diced, chopped, opened, and fucked as often as the wind blew. These things were not dirty, taboo acts as they were in this world. Humans were so uptight about what they called sex: one or more body parts going in and out of a wet hole. It was all the same with just minute variations.

Macchu had concluded that it was the psychological part that got humans aroused. A human face brought tiny shards of memory that went undetected except by the subconscious. Humans weren't aware of it, but each arousal was not only based on what they saw, heard, or touched at the present moment but also what their minds brought forth in a hidden deluge of memory. Perhaps the high cheekbones of that porn star reminded one of a childhood crush or a babysitter. Maybe the long eyelashes and thin lips of the hooker brought memories of a second cousin who once revealed her cleavage at a family barbeque. Regardless, all arousal could theoretically be traced back to a handful of blunt memories that were carved into the mind of each human.

Max instructed the girl to take the Cthulhu out of her body and dip it into the bowl of chocolate syrup on the coffee table. She did so but grimaced when he told her to lick it off. With his finger he made a slicing motion across his neck. “Do it,” he mouthed. She followed his direction. Max stopped recording. “I'm getting tired, let's finish this up tomorrow.”

Macchu was still sitting quietly, thinking. He knew that there were finite combinations of human forms. That is why, in his

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world, these forms are combined to make myriad combinations to construct new bodies for maximum physical pleasure. Though he himself masturbated to the limited form of this young girl inserting things into her asshole, Macchu saw this as a simple pleasure. It was akin to a jaded pornographer watching an old stag film; it was simple and quaint.

The commotion of Bacchu and Frank turned into an abrupt din of wet slapping and Macchu was shaken out of his meditative state. The other two were now physically fighting over the scraps of a puppy. Max would often scour the neighborhood for stray pups but lately he had been lax and so this delicacy was in limited supply. Macchu grunted and made his way over to the fracas. “Will you two please stop this juvenile bullshit?”

Frank snapped a claw in Macchu’s face. “You should mind your business, asscunt.” He snapped the other claw an inch away from Bacchu’s nose. “And you. You watch yourself.”

Max walked in. “What the fuck’s goin’ on in here? That bitch was starting to get paranoid, thought I had some gangster drug shit goin’ on in the backroom.” His eyes went over to a small stringy puddle of brown pus left by Macchu. “I told you guys to clean up after yourselves. Jesus.”

“Sorry, boss.” Bacchu said in broken, grating English. Max shrugged his shoulders and rolled his eyes. He dug into his pocket, took out a twenty-dollar bill, rolled it up, and sniffed up the pus into his left nostril.

For the next thirty minutes Max was not in the presence of the three creatures. Each layer of his consciousness was stripped away like an onion and laid to rest in the homeland of Macchu, Bacchu, and Frank. Max watched the bearded Women of the *Gati* as they gathered load upon load of body parts, still quivering with some sort of life. One of those parts, a huge penis with stringy gray hairs poking out, throbbed in tiny spasms. Max thought of Milton Berle. He thought of Uncle Miltie playing Louie the Lilac

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on the 1960s Batman television series. Pow! Bam! A bearded woman picked up the penis and shoved the tip of it into her mouth and twirling it like a lollipop. The other women laughed. Wham! Zap! Zowie! Max saw Uncle Miltie shoving a foot-long fish down his own throat and coughing up tiny crab shells in the process.

In the distance, Max saw the walls of Om-Am, the fabled pink city. Through sheer force of psychonavigation, he saw within the city, watched as arms, legs, and genitals were bought and sold in the marketplace. Bags of teeth were carried around and used for everything from filling in potholes to the construction of sex toys. Men sat in alleyways, masturbating with severed tongues that still salivated and, in a way, still held a portion of the consciousness of its original owner.

At the center of Om-Am was a small but formidable fortress with four minarets in the shape of uncircumcised penises. This was the home of Simon, God of Whores. Max felt fear spike through the layers of his awareness.

A child carrying a basket full of noses ran across the front yard of the fortress. This child, neither boy nor girl, possessed two vaginas, one on its hip and another on its left knee. It also possessed three penises, one on each shoulder and one between its legs. The child brought the basket over to a small pond and proceeded to feed the small fish. The fish themselves even possessed small human sex organs. Each one of them had a clitoris for a fin. They swam furiously in order to grab a good, tasty nose preferably one with many nose hairs for they, the fish, found that the hairs tickled their insides in a rather orgasmic way.

Max was drawn back, layer by layer, into reality.

He was lying in bed in between Macchu and Frank. Bacchu was at the foot of the bed. They must have carried him in during his trip. "Thanks, guys," he whispered, "Goodnight."

CHAPTER FOUR

Kevin went to work the following day.

It was difficult for him to keep his mind on the already boring work so each task took great effort. Toward the end of his shift, his friend Ryan came trotting in to visit. He was a teacher's assistant but had dreams of being an indie rock star. While Kevin was bagging up some canned dog food, he saw Ryan, in a *Big Black* t-shirt, make his way behind the counter.

"Man, I told you, you can't come back here," Kevin instinctively looked around for the manager. "Regina's gonna get pissed off."

Ryan laughed. "Don't worry about it. I'm leaving in a second. I tried calling your cell phone but it went to voice mail. Wanna hang out tonight?" He made eye contact with the customer whose dog food Kevin had just finished bagging. The customer, a heavy-set old man, shook his head in disapproval and walked away.

"I don't think so, not tonight. Why...anything special? And I thought you're seeing what's-her-name?" Kevin wanted to pretend that he didn't really know or care that his friend was fucking one of his students. She was of legal age but ethically, Kevin didn't think it was such a great idea. From how Ryan described her, this girl Sara had deep emotional problems and Kevin knew it could only end in disaster. But if there was one thing he learned from being friends with Ryan is that you don't criticize his decisions. That's when the claws come out.

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Ryan avoided eye contact. “Nah, I’m not seeing her tonight. I have band practice at six and I thought we can meet up at the Ram’s Head at, like, nine.” He fiddled with some rawhide sticks that were on the counter. “So, how about it?”

Kevin ran his hand through his hair. “Um, I don’t know if I’m gonna feel up to it. Been just sort of tired all day and I’m just going to go home and chill out. But Mushy has a fight this weekend if you want to meet up.” Mushy was an amateur boxer who used to date Kevin’s sister. There was a horrible break-up and Mushy had his heart broken. Kevin empathized with him and had kept in touch, always showing up to support Mushy when he fought.

“Eh, you know I’m not into that boxing shit.” Ryan started walking towards the door. “Whatever, we’ll catch each other some other time. See you later.”

“Yeah, alright, later.” Kevin was on the verge of getting pissed off. Ryan was an okay guy but lacked that *something* that made friendships worthwhile. He didn’t know exactly what it was but Ryan’s abrupt exit was an example of it. *Oh well*, Kevin thought, *I’m out of here in a half hour and then I’ll be alone, hallelujah*.

When he was ready to leave Regina, the manager, called him into her office. He noticed something different as soon as he saw her. Kevin had never really looked at her sexually, though he admitted she was a rather attractive middle-aged Spanish woman. But Kevin rather held a sort of socialist view on the situation. She was the boss and was someone to hate, the entity that oppressed the people. Today, however, he couldn’t help but feel some tension. Everyday without fail she came dressed in a skirt, pantyhose, and a flimsy blouse and today it really sent something rushing through Kevin, like a warm buzz of tingly pudding.

Regina babbled on with rhetoric and rhetorical questions while Kevin stole glances of her pantyhose and scuffed black slip-

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on dress shoes. He wondered if they were sweaty. Like a slap in the face, the image of the disembodied foot worked his nerves up into frenzied nervousness. Was she aware that he was looking down every few seconds? Would she say something?

The ankle and foot at his house now belonged to Regina. Kevin mentally transposed those pieces onto her body and started to imagine what her sweat would smell and taste like compared to Ms. Booth's. Were the pantyhose freshly washed or was she wearing them for a while? Would her feet have an additional vinegar stench? Were her toenails painted like the foot at home? Kevin looked into Regina's eyes and hoped to see the same blue swirls of the glass eye but was met with a dull brown that stopped him dead in his tracks.

"Kevin, are you listening? What's the matter?" She straightened her skirt.

He could feel his penis becoming flushed and the pair of pants he was wearing was going to make his erection quite obvious. "What? Nothing, no, why?" He started moving around to get his cock at a more discreet angle.

"You don't look like you're paying attention. And what do you keep looking down for?" Regina lifted her left foot up and the shoe fell off of it. Kevin first saw the bottom of her foot, the pantyhose were linty and worn thin. Then the smell hit him. It was like a series of assassin's bullets zeroing in on his olfactory system. He felt assassinated, like Kennedy being dealt a skull-cracking fate of foot-stench. Kevin's eyes rolled into the back of his head but then focused on getting the hell out of there.

"I'm okay. Just haven't been feeling well lately." He started making his way out of the office. "Can we pick this up tomorrow?"

She gave him that look. It was bitchy and condescending, a look that Kevin was not a stranger to. Normally it would make him pissed but today it just made his erection that much bigger.

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“Okay, tomorrow then. Bye!” She enunciated that last word as if it was a magical spell to send him out of her office and on his way home.

Kevin stumbled out of the office and out of the store with a head full of feverish cotton. Outside he leaned against the glass of the video store that neighbored the PetPlace. He had to get a hold of himself. Taking a few deep breaths, he turned his head and looked into the video store.

He saw a boy going up and down the aisles with fish in his hand. Kevin knew the fish wasn't the type you'd buy in a pet store; it was an ugly, foot-long sucker that was still slimy-wet. As the boy stopped at the end of one aisle, he bowed his head and mouthed something. Then with a slap he took the fish and attacked the *Drama* section with a ferocity that caused the whole shelf to shake. Movies tumbled onto the floor and fish scales flew into the air like rice at a wedding.

Kevin's breath started to fog up the section of window in front of him. Grey condensation obscured the boy's angry fit. Using the sleeve of his shirt, Kevin wiped the glass and saw that the boy was now shoving the fish down his throat. Two store employees were picking up the movies that had fallen onto the ground. The first employee, a busty teenager girl with blue-dyed hair, sniffed a DVD case. Flakes of fish covered her nostrils. The other employee, a fat guy in his mid-20s, was slowly picking up the movies while eyeballing his co-worker's cleavage. They both ignored the boy who by now had almost the entire fish stuffed down his gullet.

Kevin looked at the girl with blue hair and wondered what kind of socks she was wearing. Out of the blue, a middle-aged woman in a jogging suit passed Kevin and went into the store. She grabbed the boy, who now looked like a sword-swallowing dwarf, and pulled him out of the store while she screamed in a language that Kevin did not understand though he thought it might be Russian or Polish.

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What the fuck was that? Kevin was dying to know so he walked into the video store. “Excuse me.” He looked at the girl with the blue hair. She was bent over and her cleavage was on full display. “What just happened?” Kevin now looked to the fat guy who still had his eyes on the cleavage.

“Excuse me!” Kevin’s voice grew loud. “What the hell just happened in here?”

The girl looked up. “What? Nothing. Some kid just made a mess. Can I help you?” She wasn’t at all trying to hide her annoyed attitude. She was still holding the movie that had been covered with fish scales. It was a movie called *The Pink City*. On the cover, beneath a sprinkling of fish remnants, Kevin could make out a woman’s face; it was gorgeous, the eyes especially. They were glassy and blue. Kevin took a step closer but the blue haired girl hugged the DVD to her chest. “Can I HELP you with something, sir?”

“What movie is that?” Kevin had almost forgotten about the boy with the fish down his throat. “Can I see that?” The girl rolled her eyes and handed it to him. Kevin took the case and brushed the scales off. The cover no longer said *The Pink City*. Instead it was a copy of *Blue Velvet*. “What the fuck?” Kevin whispered and put the case on the shelf. With a sigh, the blue haired girl picked it back up and moved it to its proper place.

Kevin walked out, trying to make sense of what just happened. *So that was fucked up. Shit, what was wrong with that kid?*

Meanwhile, inside of the store, the blue haired girl shook her head. “Fucking weirdo.” Her co-worker concurred. “Tell me about it.” He scraped up some fish scales with his fingernail, stuck it under his left nostril and inhaled.

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* * *

At home, Kevin had more pieces waiting for him. It was becoming a routine: the pieces of the sex doll were laid out on his bed in the shape of a woman. At times it was uncomfortable for Kevin; it sometimes reminded him of a crime scene but without the blood and gore. During the past few nights, Mithra had dropped off more pieces and now the only things missing were the head, breasts and vagina. Because the thought of a headless woman in his bed was close to nauseating he got a picture of Yvonne Craig sans Batgirl mask and put that face where the head should have been. He then put the glass eyes over Yvonne's eyes and took a look at his handiwork. The woman in the picture looked at him with an innocent but sexy grin and two eyes that pointed in different directions. That relaxed Kevin just a little bit.

He sat on the edge of the bed, exhausted. *Shit, what a fucking day.* Working at the pet store wasn't that taxing but it was at times extremely mind-numbing. *I need a vacation.* Though he lacked any real skills, Kevin had always thought he'd become something instead of just working somewhere.

He especially never imagined himself as a guy who'd be working retail. But no money for college meant no education and therefore no great job. Because of his parent's divorce, his mother had to work two jobs and even then, money was always an issue. College was the last thing on the list.

For a brief moment, Kevin thought of his father. The memory was faint, like looking at a photograph negative for a few seconds: his father smoking a cigarette and holding Kevin up to see a fireworks display. Kevin wanted the memory to stir some sentimental emotion but it didn't. His father had left him when he was five and though he didn't harbor a grudge, Kevin also didn't possess any desire to see the man again. The fireworks were always a psychological symbol of the abandonment. Even so,

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Kevin felt numb if anything.

His put his cheek to the sex doll pieces. They were sweating again. The musky feminine odor slipped into Kevin's nostrils and his brain switched to masturbatory mode. He dry humped the foot while covering his face with the hand, glancing up now and again to look at the picture. Sweat from the palm streaked across his face. The glass eyes stared at him and he reached orgasm as he looked into it, becoming entranced with the blue swirls.

From behind him Mithra ran out of the kitchen carrying a tarot card in his mouth. He jumped onto the bed and dropped it in front of Kevin. "The Ace of Wands, huh?" Kevin stroked the cat and picked up the card. "Don't you know that you're the only one who knows what these mean? I didn't read the book yet, kid." Mithra answered with a pigeon sound and then ran back into the kitchen. A minute later he came back slowly, dragging something.

Kevin looked over. Mithra was lugging a human head covered in long, shimmering brown hair. The eye sockets were two shallow holes that screamed for sight. The cat dropped the head on the floor in front of the bed. Kevin grabbed the glass eyes and delicately inserted them into the sockets. Each of the eyes went in with a sexy, whispery *POP!*

"Christ on a crutch, Mithra." Kevin instantly regretted having just masturbated.

CHAPTER FIVE

Simon, the God of Whores, walked into his fortress in the city of Om-Am. Though most of the citizens considered it a holy place, Simon himself had a lot of self-doubt. He had worked hard throughout his long life to reach his present level of consciousness and being; despite this accomplishment, he never lost humility. Though many called him God of Whores, he knew in his heart that he would always be simply Simon.

He stared at his harem. The room was practically a quivering mass of patchwork flesh. Limbs and orifices were tangled in pretzel-like patterns surrounded by centuries-old artwork that covered the walls. Simon walked up to a new member of his harem, a body that possessed five arms, three legs, and a plethora of holes, each awaiting some sort of insertion.

With a grunt of approval, Simon took out his penis and stuck it in between what looked like an armpit and an elbow. Adjacent to the elbow was a pink, hairy anus. Simon wet his finger and stuck it in; digging deep in order to see what the Women of the *Gati* had hidden up there.

They were always playing jokes on him, stuffing jade statuettes, gold rings, and sometimes even teeth deep inside anuses, mouths, ears, vaginas, and urethras. Simon really loved the Women; they were excellent workers and were eternal mothers at heart. His own mother had died during childbirth and so all of the bearded Women of the *Gati* served as surrogates, providing

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guidance and sustenance throughout his life.

Simon's finger probed the anus: no such luck. This time the Women did not hide any prize inside the asshole. Simon was mildly disappointed but was relieved to find that the colon itself was filled with sores that were on the verge of busting. *I wonder what disease will sneak out. I could use another one.* The very thought of a disease or infection made his erection grow harder. With some more spit and some elbow grease, Simon started to fist the asshole until he was up to his forearm. The gaping hole farted pus and sore-juice as Simon fucked the armpit. He threw his head back and looked up at the ceiling painting.

The painting was a classic one: a black vehicle made of metal and hair being driven by a giant fish. In the backseat, a man and a woman waving, the man's head collapsing outward in sparks of rainbow chunks and the woman's face stiff with false worry while she chewed on a piece of the man's skull and brain. Simon half-closed his eyes and said a prayer to King Dallas and his wife, Jackie Skull-Eater.

For the next two minutes, Simon squeezed out an intense orgasm that sent his green-yellow seed all over the quivering chunk of harem-meat.

"I'm naming you Ruby Gaping," Simon said to the mass of flesh. It looked up at him with five eyes and two mouths. "Thank you, your holiness," the mouths spoke in unison.

* * *

Simon left his fortress and traveled to the east side of Om-Am where the stench of sex and disease was always thick in the air. Instead of walking the three miles, Simon had decided to take his favorite mode of transportation: the *Phord Gracilis*, a moving cart made entirely of human legs held together by stringy loops of

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blond hair. It was controlled by thought alone. If Simon wanted to go left, the feet went left. If Simon wanted to go right, the feet went right. It was as simple as that.

Leaning back on the *Phord's* front seat, Simon took in the sights and smells of the short journey. To the left of him was shop after shop selling everything from candied fish guts to rare tomes; several weeks ago Simon even managed to find an original edition of the *Bizarronomicon* (though he was disappointed to realize that the rumors weren't true, that it was not bound in goat cheese and mustache hair). Then on one occasion he stumbled upon a life-size black bean and tree bark replica of King Dallas himself. It delighted him to no end. There was always a place in Simon's heart for these rare treasures.

To the right of Simon were a whole slew of business establishments that were the most common in Om-Am: *skin oracles*. Scraps of flesh harvested from the First World (otherwise known as *Scitte-Earth*, the land of the unenlightened) were used in divination rituals. Most of the customers were naïve newcomers from the surrounding villages; they weren't aware of the frauds perpetrated by the sneaky business people of Om-Am.

Most commonly the skin oracle rituals were gruesome but simple. A sliver of skin from the back of some poor unfortunate human would be stretched across two poles. Candles would be lit and the diviner would claim to "see" that skin's remnant consciousness and use the visions to predict the future. Most of the time it was nonsense but Simon believed that a small percentage really could use those visions in order to interpret and change the future actions of the truth-seeking customers. He himself had tapped into *Scitte-Earth* on several occasions. *Hell*, he thought, *I've even tapped into the Third World.*

Finally he reached his destination: the *Orange Dukkha*, a two-story tavern that offered not only exotic brews but weekly bare-knuckle boxing matches that satisfied the citizens' lust for

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primitive First World bludgeoning. It was Simon's favorite place to get away from daily responsibilities. Simon's childhood friend, Steven Sigil, worked here as a fortune-teller. Instead of flesh, however, he used only a deck of cards that stank of onions and glowed in the dark.

Simon didn't just go there to talk to Steven, however. Another one of his friends, Latrina, also worked there. Simon believed that she was one of the most beautiful beings in all of Om-Am, if not the entire Second World. She was tall but wide and had a shaven head that put her perfectly shaped skull on display. Like Steven Sigil, Latrina was a fortune-teller except she used her own body; her back was a large hole of bubbling feces.

For the right price, Latrina would go on all fours and have the customer stand over her, looking into her back, into the whirlpool of brown-black divination. The stench was overpowering but her readings were almost always accurate. Her powers did not end there, however. Simon had heard some strange stories though he was reluctant to believe all of them.

As he walked into the place, he noticed that the crowd was half of what it usually was. "Steven? Latrina?" Simon threw his voice into the small crowd. Some faces looked up at him and some nodded in recognition and respect. Simon acknowledged their gestures and smiled. There was a sound from one of the back rooms. Steven poked his head out. "Hey, Simon, good to see you!"

Steven was a very heavy and very sweaty man whom Simon loved as a brother. On this day he was wearing close to nothing. "Did you bring me anything? Hmm, did you?" Steven collected the wrinkles of First World soles. Simon had often scraped the skin off of the feet of his harem members so he could provide his friend with some souvenirs for his collection.

"I may or may not have something," Simon winked and dug into his pocket. He brought out a silk handkerchief, unfolded

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it, and revealed two strips of almost translucent flesh. “Got these off very beautiful feet.”

“Diseased?” Steven’s face lit up.

“Yeah. The top of the feet were almost rotting off. Smell was horrible.” Simon shook the skin flaps like strips of bacon and then tossed them to his friend.

“What color?” Steven preferred pale skin with deep wrinkles.

“A little tan. Sorry, all I had.”

“Ah, it’s alright. Thanks. They’ll go nicely in my collection.” He draped the strips over his face and inhaled. “They smell dirty. Nice. Very nice.” He giggled.

Simon walked over to the bar and motioned to the bartender for a drink: a cocktail of fermented squid and toothfruit. He turned to Steven. “Is Latrina around?”

Steven shrugged. “I haven’t seen her today. Should be coming in, though. You staying around till she gets here?” He took the skin off of his face and put them into his pocket.

“I might. I don’t know.” He sipped his drink. “Why’s this place so empty? Business is usually good this time of day.”

Steven shrugged. “Don’t know. I mean, we haven’t had a good show in a while. The fighters we’ve had are all old-timers. The last time we had any new fighters they turned out to just be booze-hounds, hoping to score a few free drinks after they got destroyed in the ring.”

“So what’re you going to do? Add something else? A titty-show?” Simon laughed. One of the times he had tapped into the First World he had witnessed a quant strip club performance and the image had always stuck with him. Women on a stage shaking their breasts (only two of them!) while men drooled and hollered.

Steven giggled again, thinking of bouncing breasts in the boxing ring. “We weren’t really thinking about it. Why? Got any

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ideas?”

Simon looked down into his drink. He thought he saw something more than the usual squid remains and toothfruit roots. It looked like the face of his first and only love. It looked like the face of June. “No, I don’t know. I guess there’s not much you can do until someone comes along who can put on a good show.”

Steven laughed. “How about you?”

“I haven’t fought for years and even then I could muster up the anger to put on a good fight. I’m really just a gentle soul at heart, you know, despite my reputation.” Simon gently shook his glass, hoping to dispel the vision of June. No such luck.

“Yeah, you were always a calm bastard. Oh,” Steven pointed to the door, “There she is.”

Latrina, in her long red robe, walked into the *Orange Dukkha* and immediately smiled when she saw Simon standing at the bar. “Your holiness, how nice of you to grace us with your presence!” She bowed with mocking reverence.

Simon chuckled. “Oh, you’re too kind, my lady, too kind.” He stood up and gave Latrina a brief but tight hug. She kissed him on the cheek. “Can we talk in the back?”

Latrina nodded, patted Steven on the shoulder, and followed Simon into the backroom where her divinations usually took place.

Huge paintings depicting scatological battle scenes covered all four walls. Most of the scenes were historical and most were of some relative of Simon’s. His father was painted on the west wall, showing him in a gritty conflict with the Kloodzak Army. Because Om-Am never had a standing military force, Simon’s father had to rely solely on his harem to assist him in times of need. After three brutal months of fighting, there was victory for Om-Am and the Kloodzak Army was dismembered and used as feed for the animals. Whenever Simon saw that painting, he felt a strong sense of pride not only in his father but also in the harem

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members. These were beings that could have very well refused to do anything but instead they stepped up to the task of defending their home. It often made Simon a bit teary-eyed.

Latrina offered Simon a seat. "Can I offer you another drink?"

"No, no thanks. I don't like what I saw in the first one." Simon laughed and rolled his eyes.

"What's on your mind?" She fixed herself a drink, a simple concoction of lemon juice and sweat. "You usually don't look so...tense."

Simon's eyes dropped to his hands which were tapping on the marble table in front of them. He gave a half-smile that came out looking like a nervous twitch. "I had another dream. About June."

"Oh." Latrina put her drink down and took both of Simon's hands into her own. "How long's it been? Almost a year? She didn't belong here and you know that." Her face drooped causing wrinkles that reminded Simon of those on the soles of feet.

"Just because I know something doesn't make the reality of that fact any easier to take. We've been through this before and I know it's probably futile but can I look? One more time?" He held Latrina's hands tightly.

She shook her head. "You're going to see what you've always seen. Nothing. She's gone. Gone back to where she belongs."

Simon pulled his hands away. "I just feel like something's different. Like she's coming back into my life even though nothing's changed." He got up from his seat. "I'm going to talk to Steven. His divination isn't as accurate as yours but I'll make due." He walked out sulking like a child.

Latrina threw her head back in frustration.

"Idiot."

CHAPTER SIX

After calling out sick from work for the second day in a row, Kevin went to the store to buy superglue.

When he got home, he started attaching the sex doll parts. During this task, he felt the pieces sweat, felt the tiny hairs on the legs and armpits. The weirdness didn't deter him but instead just brought him that much closer to the obsessive goal of recreating this woman, *his* woman.

He reasoned with himself. *I'm not a fucking weirdo, I know that. Okay, so it's a little weird but still. I've been doing this sort of things for years.* Kevin remembered assembling model airplanes as a child. For hours he would lock himself in his room and glue plane after plane together while inhaling the fumes of the glue. In hindsight, he realized that there was a sexual element in his pleasure as if attaching each piece of the plane was like connecting two sex organs together.

He remembered when he was ten years old he was putting together a F6F Hellcat and the fumes became too much for him. As he stumbled up from his bed he fainted on top of a magazine. The feature article was on the sitcom *Diff'rent Strokes* and when Kevin awoke, actress Dana Plato was staring up at him. That was the day he got his first erection. He tried masturbating for the first time, one hand on his penis and one on his model plane as his eyes devoured Dana Plato.

Kevin remembered that day as he glued together his newly

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found friend while Mithra ran around the apartment, chasing imaginary insects. *God, whatever happened to Dana Plato? She died, right? Was she murdered? Wait, didn't she kill herself in a porno? Or she was in a porno or something. Wait, she was a lesbian, yeah, I think so.* For a second, he imagined her face on the sex doll's body. The image slightly horrified him.

A whiff of underarm sweat wafted up to his nostrils. Kevin smelt his own armpits. *It's not me*, he thought, *so...* He put his nose to the armpit of the doll and was shocked to find that it stank like it belonged to a woman who just ran three miles in ninety-degree heat. Putting his nose deeper into the armpit, he fondled himself.

The body started to tremble.

Kevin jumped back from the bed in shock. "What the fuck!" He had glued together most of the pieces; only the breasts reminded unattached and the vagina was the only piece missing.

Every bit of the thing was shaking, convulsing like an epileptic. Kevin got closer to it and noticed that it was sweating as if fevered. "It's okay, it's okay.." He babbled and started to rub the arms of the thing, wiping the sweat off onto the bed sheet.

Getting the crazy glue, he noticed that he was trembling himself. He grabbed the left breast, slowly applied the glue, and put it into place on the chest of the doll. Kevin repeated the same process with the right breast.

The body stopped shaking.

Kevin let his face fall onto the sweaty thigh of the doll. *God, I can't believe this. This isn't real, this isn't fucking real.* He massaged his temples and tried coming up with reasonable explanations for what just happened. Every time he came up with something he just couldn't accept it as a possibility. He had the window open so it couldn't be the fumes affecting his brain. He had never dropped acid so it couldn't be a flashback. The only thing that he thought it could be was a dream but after pinching

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and scratching himself, Kevin concluded that he wasn't sleeping.
Fuck. Me.

The sweating he had accepted. If he was asked, he wouldn't have been able to give a valid reason why he had accepted that so easily. The shaking, however, was something he couldn't put his mind around. But when all was said and done, he was strangely excited.

Picking himself up off the floor, he looked to the sex doll's face. The eyes stared up at the ceiling not with the deadness that was expected but with an odd form of awareness, as if the doll was preoccupied with a daydream.

Mithra came running into the room with something in his mouth. It was a vagina, cleanly shaven and made of latex, the lips bulbous and perfectly shaped.

Kevin picked up the glue and assembled the last piece of the puzzle. Admiring his handiwork, he sat on the edge of the bed, waiting for something to happen, anything. After fifteen minutes, he gave up and threw the glue tube across the room. Then he smelt it: the musky-fishy smell of a female.

The doll sat up and the mouth opened.

“Hi, my name's June St. Éclair. What's yours?”

CHAPTER SEVEN

Max walked into the porn shop with his Hawaiian shirt wide open revealing a bushy layer of grayish chest and belly hair. The shirt was one that he wore almost every day. He had gotten it on the island of Toi'di in the South Pacific while on vacation with his first wife, Samantha.

Despite the gorgeous beaches and native beauty, all that Max remembers from that trip is buying the shirt and watching a tribe of dwarves dance around a fire holding long ropes of cheese. The heat made the ropes give off the stink of sweaty feet and Max recalled that smell along with the salty-sweet breeze that came off of the ocean. *Those dwarves were fucking ridiculous*, Max remembered. *One minute they dance around with cheese and the next minute they're swallowing fish whole. What a vacation, what a goddamn vacation. Thank god we didn't go to Disney World.*

He spotted something on the VHS discount rack and stopped. It was one of his old soft-core movies. *Girls Against Girls #4*. Max remembered it well on account that he had almost landed has-been actress Dana Plato for one of the scenes. She died, however, before he could secure the deal. Nevertheless, he was a bit miffed to find one of his movies in the bargain section. His eyes scanned the store and landed on Gregory Garglestock. "Hey, what's up with this?" Max held up the video.

Gregory shrugged and gave an exaggerated frown. "I gotta

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do that with the videos that haven't sold in a while. Besides, DVD is the new thing, you know that."

"Yeah, whatever." Max put *Girls Against Girls #4* back on the shelf, hiding it behind a copy of *Head of David #7*. "You know I'm not here to fucking shop so go in the back and bring her the hell out."

"Whatever you say, asshole." Gregory whispered the last word, not wanting to anger Max. He made his way into the backroom and started digging around. A layer of sweat developed on his forehead as he searched box after box. *Which one was it in? Shit! I thought it was this one.. Shit, shit, shit!!* Things got even more tense when Max appeared in the doorway.

"Is there a problem?" A deep frown framed the bottom of his face.

Gregory swallowed. "No, not at all. I rearranged some shit yesterday. It's around here somewhere. Don't worry about it."

"Oh, I'm not the one who should be worried, pal. Just find her." Max walked back into the shop, thinking about *her*, the sex doll replica of June St. Éclair, one of the "stars" from his past movies. This doll was special; he had only one made since the process and ritual was far too complex for him to complete a second time. Besides, he hadn't had *permission* to create another one and so he didn't.

Gregory walked out of the backroom, sweaty and babbling. "Listen, I must have brought the box to the basement. I know it was in there, I saw it last week. I'll have it for your tomorrow, Max, I swear."

Max grunted. "You bet your ass I'll be back tomorrow and I won't be alone. I ask you to do one goddamn favor for me and this is what happens? Shit, man, you shouldn't fuck with me." He walked out of the store but not before grabbing a copy of *Leg Show*. "Put it on my tab," he shouted, already on the sidewalk.

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* * *

Three old, purple women danced in front of Pop Crowley.

They pranced and jiggled, shaking their drooping breasts in circles. Pop shook his head to the music that blasted from the stereo: *Captain Beefheart's* "Blabber 'N Smoke".

Then the telephone rang. He turned down the volume. "Hold on, ladies, I'll be right with you." He put his hand over the phone and wiggled his fingers, his normal ritual for answering the phone. The purple women dissolved into blurry mist and were replaced by three piles of purple imported Malaysian rice.

"Hello?" Pop sang into the phone.

"Pop, it's Max. What's going on?"

The piles of rice bubbled and popped like corn and then melted into one big pile of cheese. Pop's nostrils twitched. *Smells like feet.*

"What do you want, motherfucker? I'm busy." Pop kept his eyes on the bubbling cheese that was stringy like mozzarella but had holes like Swiss.

"I need you tomorrow. I'll pick you up at noon. Got it?"

"What? Yeah, whatever. We doing a shoot?" Pop thought about the last time he made a movie for Max. *Cherry-O-Gasm #2*. He got to plug two eighteen year old girls. They weren't too happy about it, he knew that. He had a realistic self-image and knew most women, especially younger ones, would find him butt-ugly. But Pop was a fifty year old beer-bellied biker and proud of it. And anyway, he took what he could get.

"No, just a pick up. Some asshole lost some of my shit. I just want you there for the intimidation factor. But I'm probably bringing the boys, too. I haven't decided yet."

"Yeah, alright. Noon, then." Pop hung up. His eyes had been on the cheese the entire time. Now the pile swirled into shapes: elbows, knees, tropical fish, wagon wheels, derringer pis-

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tols, talking hats. Pop needed a drink.

Pop walked to the fifty-gallon salt-water fish tank that sat in the corner of his living room. "I'll be back in a couple a' hours. I'll feed you guys when I get back." Pop gently tapped the glass, blew kisses to the fish and then left his apartment.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Kevin never knew fucking a sex doll would be so soul-shattering.

He'd fucked girls before, sure, but it had never been like this. The girls he had screwed, well, there was always a sort of awkwardness as if each partner was worried about their own performance. They would both be holding back, never really reaching that peak of sexual and spiritual ecstasy.

But this had been different.

It was forty-five minutes of sweaty, rhythmic bliss. Kevin was surprised that it wasn't porn-sex considering the fact that his partner was a sex doll. There was only the subtlest hint of filthiness; it was mostly heart-pounding passion. Well, at least on his end. He wasn't so sure she even had a real, blood-pumping heart.

What he did know, however, was that June St. Éclair, piece-meal sex doll, was the sweetest woman he'd ever met.

It was weird how things worked out. For the past few months, Kevin had lamented the fact that he didn't have a girlfriend. He even stooped so low as to be jealous of Ryan. At least he had someone even if it was an emotionally disturbed student. Now, after spending time with June, Kevin had the urge to call his friend on the phone and brag. Brag about what, Kevin wasn't sure. *Hey, I got this living, breathing sex doll and she's, like, really hot and smart and you should meet her. We should all go to the movies.*

Kevin turned over in the bed. June was next to him, star-

Piecemeal June

ing up at the ceiling with her eyes half-opened. She had told him that she can't experience real sleep like he does. Instead, she sleeps like a cat, getting rest here and there rather than one long slumber. It wasn't until they fucked several times that he finally decided to pop the question.

"June...what the hell are you?" He knew as soon as it came out of his mouth that it wasn't the most delicate way he could have phrased the question but it was the simplest. Beating around the bush was the last thing he wanted to do at this point in time. As bizarre as it sounded, he was ready to make a commitment.

June's eyes opened and she turned to him. Her eyes, though made of glass, looked no faker than anyone else's, Kevin had decided. They were beautiful and displayed such life, such awareness.

A heavy sigh escaped from her plastic lips. "Even if we had a million years together, I don't know if I could explain everything that I am, everything that I have been. I'd like to spare you the time. I'd rather us spend our time together just like this, touching, loving, laughing," she looked at him, "not verbally dissecting every single experience of mine, every aspect of me."

Kevin caressed her hair. It wasn't real hair, he knew that, but it felt authentic enough. It felt natural to him; it felt *good*. "I've tried just not thinking about it but I came to a point where I just had to ask. I don't think we can avoid confusion. I'm confused, confused about what you are, where you came from, what the hell we're doing. I have no complaints, don't worry. But I just need some pieces of the puzzle. Or any piece for that matter." He touched her cheek.

June's eyes avoided Kevin's as she started talking in whispers. "I'm not an individual; I'm not a whole person. I'm a combination of lots of things, people, places. I'm like a photograph of a city. It's the city but it's not the city. It's one object but it reflects

so much more.”

Kevin didn't want to come off sounding stupid but he couldn't help it. Normally he wouldn't open his mouth but in this case he really did want to comprehend. “June, I really don't get it. Just please, dumb it down for me.”

“My body, my consciousness, everything. They're all from different places. Every part of me holds a history, some sort of memory.”

“Like a computer?” Kevin thought he understood.

June shook her head. “No, not really. It's less direct, more intuitive. I told you, if we had forever I couldn't explain it all.” She sat up and waved her hands. “Maybe it's just pointless to even try to explain it.”

“Please, goddamnit, I want to know,” Kevin's voice bordered on angry. He quickly curbed the attitude.

June sighed. “Everything around you, the air you breathe, the thoughts you think, the wind you feel on your skin when you walk down the street, all of it. It's all real only to a certain point. There's so much more. So many other places.”

“Other... planets?” Kevin's eyes widened. “Are you an alien?”

“No, no... I'm not talking about other planets. Just other... places. They're here but not here. Anyway, this reality, the reality you're used to, that's only one of them. There're two others that I'm aware of. There was a woman once who was very special to a very powerful man and he had me made in her image from various pieces of people and things. I don't even know how to explain it. It doesn't make sense on the level or reality that you're used to, I'm sorry.”

“But what happened, why are you here?”

“I was brought here by someone who wanted me for himself.” She got out of bed and walked over to the bathroom. It still amazed Kevin that June can piss and shit like a human being. Her

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pussy still got wet and she could spit and cough; it confounded him.

Her voice rose from the bathroom. “So, that’s that. I’m here and that’s all you need to know. I like you. On whatever level of reality this is, I like you. I don’t want to say love because I don’t know what that means to you and you don’t know what that means to me. So I’ll say that I like you. I think that expresses how I feel pretty accurately.”

Kevin smiled. “I like you, too.” He admitted to himself that if she had said she loved him, he would have reciprocated.

“I have one more question but it might sound stupid.”

June laughed. “I doubt it’s stupid but go ahead.”

“In these other..places. They speak..English?” He had wondered that ever since she started talking. If she was telling the truth and he assumed she was, was he to believe that English was the preferred language?

“No, not at all. I’m not entirely sure how it all works but it’s just about, I don’t know, perception. Language isn’t a barrier where I’m from but I don’t really know why. It just works out as if those other realities are sort of, I don’t know, beyond simple phonetic sounds? Ever have a dream where you instinctively know things? That’s what it’s like, I guess.” She walked out of the bathroom and sat down next to Kevin. “Does any of this make sense?”

“Yeah, I guess so.” He smiled.

“Good, now let’s get something to eat. I’m starving!”

* * *

After eating some Chinese take-out, Kevin and June relaxed on the couch watching a rerun of *Diff’rent Strokes*, the episode where Arnold and Sam befriend an epileptic street performer.

Mithra, who had been even more cathartic than usual ever

Jordan Krall

since June woke up, jumped up between the two of them carrying a Tarot card in his mouth. He dropped it on Kevin's lap.

"What's up now, buddy?" Kevin picked up the card, the Queen of Cups. "You know I still haven't researched this shit. Is this good or bad?"

Mithra's tail sank down between his legs.

"Oh, don't be such a sour-puss." Kevin rubbed Mithra's chin but the cat only grunted and jumped down from the couch.

"Your cat's very...moody." June looked amused.

"No kidding," Kevin laughed. "So, I meant to ask you. Do you want to go out somewhere with me?"

"Out? But...the way I look. Isn't that going to cause a little bit of a problem?"

"Well, we'll figure that out. Get a coat with a hood or something. Anyway, what about it?"

June looked down at her lap. "I don't know. Where're we going?"

"A friend of mine is a boxer. You know what that is, right? It's fighting. Two guys punching each other until one of them falls down and can't get up."

"Yeah, I know what that is. I've seen that before. Two dumb males going at it until their hands are broken and their jaws are falling off."

Kevin laughed. "Ha! Oh, this isn't that brutal, June. They wear gloves."

"Sounds like a plan, I guess."

"Good. Now let me go get you some clothes to wear outside."

From the kitchen, Mithra started to make a racket digging holes in his cat litter and kicking it onto the floor.

CHAPTER NINE

Meanwhile in South River, the next town over, the real flesh-and-blood June St. Éclair lived a quiet life for she was now Mrs. June Jorgenson, devoted wife of Phil Jorgenson. She had given up her old life despite having met her husband at a porn convention. “I love your work,” he had said. June fell madly in love but soon realized that what Phil loved wasn’t her but rather the degraded performer, the slut at the end of her rope.

She was making dinner while Phil was in his favorite chair in the living room watching the news. The phone rang.

“Hello?” She held the phone to her ear with her shoulder while she continued to cut carrots.

A familiar voice oozed through the earpiece. “Hello, cupcake, how’ve you been?”

June felt nauseous. “Pop.”

“The one and only. So, you ready to come back, do a couple of scenes for me? I want to surprise Max and get you back in the game. I thought maybe we’d start with an anal scene and work up to some piss and shit stuff later.” He laughed a life-long smoker’s laugh.

“No, I told you before. No. I’m done, out of the business.”

Phil’s voice called from the living room. “Who is it, June?”

“No one!” June knew that answer wouldn’t fly with Phil. He came walking into the kitchen and grabbed the phone from

her.

“Hello? Who is this?” Phil listened and then smiled. “Oh, hiya, buddy, what’s up? Really? Huh.”

June shook her head, tears gathering in her eyes. She put her hand on Phil’s arm but he just shook it off.

“Yeah, she’ll do it. Sure. Okay. You’re welcome. Okay. Bye.” He hung up. “Just give me the phone next time. You know we need the money. And you know I like seeing you work so use your brain next time, will you?” He went back into the living room and plopped his fat ass in front of the television. He smiled, wondering what the new scenes would be like. He’d like to see his wife tied up maybe. Or hung from the ceiling while being double-penetrated and pissed on by a homeless guy.

June picked a knife up, contemplated shoving it into Phil’s throat, and then put it down again. She put her head into her hands and sobbed. *No more. I can’t do it. I just won’t.* She picked up the knife again and put it to her wrists. Behind them she saw the carrots, half chopped and waiting to be used in a delicious meal courtesy of a recipe she watched on the food channel. *One minute you’re cutting veggies, next minute you want to kill yourself because your husband is pimping you out. No fucking way. Not again.*

Phil flipped through the channels and settled on a rerun of *Diff’rent Strokes*, the episode where Arnold’s friend gets molested by the guy who owns the bicycle shop. He started to laugh but was cut short by the knife going through his Adam’s apple. Blood spurted down his shirt and into his mouth. Not comprehending what was happening, he tried calling to his wife for help. The last thing he saw was June holding the knife with one hand and giving him the finger with the other. Then he collapsed on the floor and died.

June washed the knife and finished preparing the meal. Afterwards, she took out the good china and sat down at the

Piecemeal June

dining room table. June sat with her back to her dead husband, smiling and making sure to chew slowly, savoring every single bite.

* * *

Max Alexander and Pop Crowley walked into the porn shop together. Greg Garglestock was at the counter and as soon as he saw the two of them walk in, his shoulders drooped and sweat started to drip from almost every pore of his body.

“So, my man, did you find her or what?” Max put both hands, palms down, on the glass counter. They seemed to hover above the expensive jewel-encrusted dildos and vintage pin-up playing cards.

“I, uh, no, I couldn’t find it,” Greg stuttered.

“Her. You couldn’t find *her*,” Max corrected him.

“Her, that’s right. I couldn’t find *her*. I looked everywhere. I think someone,” Greg swallowed, “STOLE it.”

Max’s face turned red while Pop stood there with his arms crossed. He had to admit that he hadn’t been fully paying attention to Max when he explained the whole story behind the sex doll. All he really remembered was that it had to do with Max’s old boss.

“Stole it? Who the *fuck* is robbing *you*?” Max poked a finger into Greg’s chest. “If I find out you’re pulling some bullshit... I swear...”

Pop whispered something into Max’s ear.

Max grabbed Greg by the shirt. “Call all the dirtbags you have working here and have them come down so I can ask them some questions. Got it?”

“Yeah, sure, Max, sure,” Greg babbled on, grabbing the phone from the wall. He started dialing.

Jordan Krall

While Greg was on the phone getting in touch with his employees, Max continued to talk. “And to think I was doing you a favor, offering to shoot a movie in your basement. Do you have any idea what freaky shit we could’ve done with that doll? Shit, you stupid sonovabitch.” He walked away from the counter. Pop followed, scratching at his beard that had been crusted with pea soup and mayonnaise. He pulled a beard hair out and held it up. “Hey look, Max. It looks like a spider leg. Weird, huh?”

CHAPTER TEN

Dressed in large, black sunglasses, a baggy coat, her head covered with both a hood and a shawl, Kevin's new sex doll girlfriend June stood watching Mushy Nebuchadnezzar go toe to toe with Tim "Sweet Meat" Sullivan. Kevin and June were seated in the second row of the *Sons of the Shamrock Hall* where weekly amateur boxing matches were held.

Kevin winced each time Mushy took a blow to the head. He was already punch drunk and each hit he took just scrambled his brains even more. After Tim "Sweet Meat" Sullivan dropped Mushy in the fifth round, Kevin and June walked into the locker room so they'd be there when Mushy came back. On the way there, Kevin confided in June.

"Listen, Mushy can be a little . . . forgetful. He's been fighting for almost fifteen years and has taken a lot of hard shots to the head. So don't take offense from anything he says, okay?"

June nodded and made sure to keep her head down so no one would take much notice of her unnatural features. Mushy was carried in by his crew and then sat on a stool across from Kevin. His manager handed him a bottle of water and an icepack.

"So how'd you like the fight?" Mushy tried opening his left eye which was swollen to the size of a small cantaloupe. "Hey, who's the little lady?"

June tensed up and Kevin put a hand on her back. "Mushy, this is June. June, meet Mushy, the best amateur boxer New Jer-

sey has to offer.”

Mushy laughed and blood trickled out of several cuts on his face. “What’d we go back in time? You know I ain’t won a fight in years.”

“Yet they keep you giving you fights, how about that.”

“They like me is all, I’m a good entertainer. So, what’s her name again? I’m sorry,” Mushy stuttered and looked embarrassed.

“June.”

“Oh, yeah, June, how are you? How long you been with my boy Kevin?”

June’s mouth opened but it took a few seconds for the words to come out. “Oh, just a few days.”

Mushy squinted. “Hey, you look familiar. Do I know you?”

Kevin’s eyes widened and he looked at June. She was looking straight ahead and then spoke. “No, I don’t believe so. How could I forget such a handsome man like you?”

“Aww!” Mushy looked at Kevin. “You sure got a sweet girl, alright!” He laughed.

Mushy was a big man, six-foot-four and possessing broad shoulders that seemed to rise up like two extra heads. As he sat on the stool recovering, his face got white and his posture drooped. He started mumbling. “Lord, oh, Lord I’m on my way. That’s just disgusting, sure is, disgusting, like three ugly children snap-snapping away at his flesh, vile I’ve got to say, vile.” He looked up to the ceiling. “Who’s that in the car? Man, what’ve we got maybe one man, two men, three men did the deed? The deed’s done, yessir, the king is dead and the queen is eating cake.”

June looked to Kevin who shook his head as if to say “This is what I was talking about.” She gave a small nod in understanding.

Mushy trembled, cleared his throat, and then let his spit fly off towards the garbage can. He missed by two feet. The

Piecemeal June

phlegm landed with a loud splat, the shape of it reminding Kevin of a woman with long, sexy legs glistening with bubbly sweat.

June sat up and put her hand on Mushy's shoulder. He lifted his head and looked at her face. His mouth opened as she lowered the sunglasses.

"I...uh...Hey Kevin, guess what?" Mushy looked to Kevin, back to June's face and then to the floor. "I'm gonna be moving soon. Gonna move in with my cousin, David."

Kevin stood up and pulled June back. "Yeah, where?"

"Shadow Hills, California. Not quite sure where it is but David says it's nice. It's the car crash capital of the country, he says."

Kevin forced a smile. "No kidding?" He wasn't sure of the appropriate reaction to the news. "So, does that mean you're retiring?"

"Eh, maybe, we'll see. David said he don't know if they got any fighting out there but he said he's gonna take care of me."

A broad smile came to Kevin's face as he remembered the numerous fights Mushy had been in since they'd known each other. He pointed to Mushy and addressed June. "You should've seen this guy ten years ago. Guys would pay their managers just to get them out of a fight with Mushy. He was a maniac, it was awesome. I still remember the first time I saw him fight, he was up against this huge black guy, I don't remember his name but he had a good thirty pounds on Mushy. Anyway, second minute of the first round, BAM, Mushy lands an overhand right and lays this guy out, broke his jaw."

Mushy looked embarrassed, half-smiling and shaking his head. "Ah, that was a lucky shot I got on him. He was a tough guy."

"You were always such a modest guy, man. Anyway, I'm going to miss you. A lot." Kevin got up and patted Mushy on the shoulder. June followed and did the same.

Jordan Krall

Mushy got up and grabbed Kevin, giving him a great big bear hug. “Right back at ya, kid. But I do know we have to get together before I go. I’ll stop by in a few days. I’ll call you first.”

“Sounds good.”

June kissed Mushy on the cheek. “It was nice seeing you fight. Take care of yourself.”

“Thanks, hon.” Mushy blushed. “It was a pleasure meeting you.”

Kevin and June left and Mushy was alone in the locker room. He’d been fighting on and off in this same hall for fifteen years. Now, at age 35, he was getting tired both mentally and physically. He needed a change of scenery.

He stuck his finger into his mouth and pulled out a bloody tooth. Rubbing his bruised chin, Mushy walked over to the dark, wet corner of the locker room. He started picking at a spot in the wall, digging out the loose rubble with his fingers until there was a hole with a two inch diameter. Mushy stuck three of his fingers in and pulled out a dozen dusty teeth. Putting them into his hand, he added his newly uprooted tooth to the collection and then put them back into the hole.

Mushy pulled down his shorts and inserted his engorged penis into the hole.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

After questioning most of the porn shop employees, Max was no closer to finding his sex doll. “Motherfuck.” He slammed his fist down on Greg’s back. “Who else is there?”

Greg gulped. “Um, just one other guy. Wally. He’ll be in soon, half hour maybe.”

“I told you to call all the guys here NOW. I don’t have all day.” He was getting more frustrated by the minute. Pop was next to him, twirling his beard hairs and singing.

“Rocket rocket U.S.A. . . .” His voice was whiskey-soured gravel.

Max turned to him and gave him a nasty look. “What the fuck you singing?”

Pop shrugged. “I dunno. Heard it on the radio.” He continued to sing but walked away from Max as to not upset him more.

They waited for another forty-five minutes and finally Wally came walking in. He was a short, plump guy sporting a red and black mohawk haircut; his *Crass* t-shirt at least two sizes too small. On his feet were checkered Converse sneakers that had seen better years. He walked in smiling. “Hey, what’s going on? What’s up?”

Greg walked over to him, chest pushed out, playing the role of boss real well to impress Max. “Where the fuck where you? I told you to be here fucking fifteen minutes ago!” Wally

shrugged.

“Dude, what’s the big deal, it’s my day off anyway.” He fiddled with the oversized dildos. Max gave Pop a wink and motioned toward Wally. Pop shook his head.

A fist landed smack-dab in the center of the *Crass* logo; Wally went down to his knees. Max started asking questions and when Wally was able to finally catch his breath he started babbling.

“I don’t know what the fuck you’re talking about, Christ, fuck, I can’t breathe!” He lifted his shirt and examined his belly.

“That’ll be the least of your worries. Just tell me, did you see anyone take my shit? A sex doll, not one of those blow-up ones, a life-like doll that was in one of those boxes with the word MAX written on it. You know.. because my name is Max and anything in those boxes was MINE. Understand? So?” Max felt his stomach bubble. “Shit, what now?” Pop walked over.

“Something wrong, boss?”

“Don’t worry about me. Just my stomach. Wally, my boy, where the fuck is my doll? The pieces didn’t just get up and walk away on their own, did they? Is that what you’re telling me?”

Wally sat there on the ground, his eyes filling with tears of pain and fright. He didn’t know anything about a theft but he pondered the questions anyway. In a span of a minute and a half he reenacted the last week on the job. “I remember something.”

“Well then fucking enlighten us, jack-off.” Max stepped closer to the punk.

“The cat that comes around here, Greg knows what I’m talking about. One day I saw it running out of here with something in his mouth. I didn’t think anything of it, figured it was some garbage or something, I don’t know. But it could have been a piece of the doll but I’m not sure. That’s all I remember, I swear.”

Max looked somewhat pleased. He doubted the kid would be so stupid as to lie to him and especially make up a lie like that.

Piecemeal June

A cat? That's ridiculous. "Greg, what cat is he talking about?"

Greg looked down at his shoes. "One of my tenants has a cat, sometimes comes down here. He lives upstairs."

"What apartment, Greg?" Max lifted his chin and smiled.

With a frown, Greg said, "Upstairs. First door on the right."

Max farted. A loud, trumpet-like call exited his ass and sent Pop walking away. Greg dared not move. "Shit, my fucking stomach's killing me. Pop, take care of the guy upstairs. I'm getting the fuck out of here, I gotta take a real mean shit."

Pop pointed to the backroom. "Just use the bathroom here."

"Yeah, I'm gonna use the fucking bathroom in a porn shop, fucking cum puddles everywhere, you kidding me? I'd rather shit in the street." He quickly ran out farting while Pop and Greg looked at each other and exchanged giggles.

* * *

"Anyone home?" Pop knocked again. He didn't think he really needed to but he figured he'd give the guy the benefit of the doubt and let him answer the door like a gentleman. Then Pop would lay into him.

With one downward motion, Pop breaks the doorknob with his fist sending the thing down the steps. He leaned into the door and pushed it open. "I'm coming in, motherfucker, ready or not."

Ten minutes of searching the apartment left Pop with nothing to report back to Max. During the search, he made sure to smash the television, break the records and CDs in pieces, and kick several holes in the walls. Just as he was finishing throwing the contents of the refrigerator onto the kitchen floor, his stomach gurgled. "Shit."

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It was a sharp, sudden pain of gas that started right below his belly button. He doubled over in pain as wet, warm gas escaped out of his asshole. Pop ran into the bathroom and sat down, barely having time to pull down his pants when his bowels exploded in a cacophony of rippling farts. “GodDAMN!” He leaned his head on his hands and sighed.

Out of the corner of his eye he saw something moving. It was Mithra, coming out from under Kevin’s bed and walking across the floor. He stopped in front of the bathroom and sat.

“Oh, look who decided to come out, you little bastard.” Pop picked up the bar of soap from the sink and threw it at the cat, hitting it in the ribs. Mithra squealed and ran back into Kevin’s room.

The toilet made a sound.

“What the fuck?”

An abrasive chiming echoed out of the water, causing Pop’s diarrhea to bubble like stew on a stove. He sat up, liquid shit running down the backs of his thighs, and turned to look into the bowl. “Oh for Christ’s sake, what now?”

A small burst shot out of the toilet, sending a tidal wave of feces and brown water up and onto Pop. He yelled, stepped back, and tripped backwards, falling on his ass. Another small eruption came next and he watched in horror as a small piece of his own shit hovered in the air towards him. It landed with a SPLAT right on his forehead. “Aw, shit, shit, what the fuck, what the fuck!!” Pulling his pants up on the way out, Pop ran through the doorway and down the stairs out onto the sidewalk. A couple of people looked over at him and chuckled. Pop mumbled a curse and got onto his motorcycle.

Meanwhile in Kevin’s apartment, Mithra sat under the bed, grooming himself.

CHAPTER TWELVE

For two hours, Simon made Steven Sigil use his cards to explore the June situation. Patiently, Steven did reading after reading, coming up with the same result almost every time. “Further involvement will only bring pain.” Steven hated to say those words to Simon.

Steven tried to change the subject. “So, I hear you’re opening up a new brothel over there in Tosu. I guess you’ve got whores to spare, huh?” He smiled.

Simon shrugged. “Yes, that’s the plan. My harem’s getting too large to manage by myself and so I figured I’d open up another one. Tosu seemed like the right place. There aren’t too many brothels there to begin with.”

“I heard they mostly have spit-shops over there. A few of my nieces went and sold their saliva. All they had to do was fill a jar about this big,” he separated his hands by six inches, “and they got fifty shells each, you believe that?”

Without smiling, Simon chuckled. “Well, we have a spit-shop or two here and they sell only diseased saliva. I bet you can’t find that in Tosu. Maybe we’ll change that, I don’t know.” He stood up and patted Steven’s shoulder. “Thanks for everything. I appreciate it.”

“The pleasure is all mine, your holiness, all mine.”

Jordan Krall

* * *

“You’re shitting me, right?” Max couldn’t stop laughing. He sat on his couch, right below a bad surrealist painting depicting a young boy shoving a fish down his throat while tiny clones of John F. Kennedy rode bicycles around his feet.

“No, for fuck’s sake. I’m not lying!” Pop still felt dirty even after showering. He eyed up the artwork behind Max and rubbed his head. “I’ve always wanted to ask you: what the hell is that ugly piece of shit?”

“That ‘piece of shit’ is an original Tim Sullivan circa 1962.”

Pop looked closer at the painting. “What’s it called? Worth anything?”

“It’s called ‘Cantaloupe in my Mouth’ and it’s worth more than your goddamn life.” Max laughed. “You have room to talk, calling something a piece of shit considering you came to my house looking like a big old turd.”

Pop grunted and walked into the kitchen. He went through the cabinets and found what he was looking for: rice. With one motion he tore the box open and showered the floor. He heard Max yell “What the hell you doing in there?” but ignored him. Pop knelt down and caressed the grains.

Within a minute, hundreds of old, nude women came to life on the floor, dancing and jumping up onto him. A group of the women held hands and jumped into his nostrils; Pop sniffed them up and fell face first onto the rice-women.

The rest of them licked Pop from head to toe, devouring his dead skin cells. Max again yelled from the living room. “Make me a sandwich or something, will ya?”

Pop gathered up the old women, grabbed four pieces of Pepperidge Farm Hearty White bread, and mashed the women into two sandwiches. He brought them out to the living room and handed one to Max.

Piecemeal June

“What’s in it?” Max looked in the sandwich. “Fucking cheese sandwiches? What am I, twelve years old?” Despite his complaint, he took a bite anyway. He sniffed.

“Smells like feet.”

Pop just smiled and wiggled his nose; he still could hear the women in his sinuses, screeching and hollering as they were grinding their asses against his insides.

With a mouthful of his cheese sandwich, Max started to talk about their situation. “So, I’m thinking we go back to that asshole’s apartment. I bring the boys with us and we take care of it.”

Pop nodded. “Sounds good, I guess. I just don’t know about that fucking place, that toilet.”

“Don’t worry about it. Just make sure you take a shit before we leave.”

* * *

Kevin and June drove down Washington Road and turned up Main Street. While they looked for a parking spot, Kevin’s cell phone rang. “June, can you hold the wheel?”

He picked up the phone while keeping an eye out for the cops; the last thing he wanted was a ticket for driving while talking on the phone.

His phone said it was Ryan. “Hey, buddy, what’s up?” Ryan answered in a panicked, breathless voice.

“Kevin, yo, I’m in trouble, man, you gotta help me out, fucking shit, I’m in trouble, please...” He rambled. “Sara and I were in an accident, shit, man. She’s hurt bad.” Sara was the student that Ryan had been dating. Kevin winced at the sound of her name. Just thinking about his friend screwing the girl made him uneasy.

Jordan Krall

“Okay, calm down, man, calm down. Just relax and call 911. Where you guys?”

“We’re in Old Bridge by that Sunoco station. But listen, I can’t call the cops. We were smoking weed, I can’t fucking call 911, they’ll arrest me, I can’t...” Ryan started sobbing. Kevin could hear him shouting at Sara who sounded like she was babbling with a mouthful of cotton.

“Ryan, how bad is she hurt?” He couldn’t bring himself to say her name. He had nothing against her, really, but saying her name made him feel like he was validating their relationship.

“Goddamn, man, her...legs...they’re off, man, I mean, they’re cut off. The dashboard cut them off. Fucking blood everywhere, man, she’s still talking, still alive but please just help us, please.” It sounded like Ryan dropped the phone.

Kevin turned to June and whispered. “It’s my friend. He was in an accident.” She nodded in concern.

Ryan came back on the phone. “Please, are you going to come?”

“Yeah, I’ll be there. But if I’m not there in fifteen minutes, promise me you’ll call 911, please Ryan, just promise me that much.” His friend was silent on the other end but after a few seconds and a couple of heavy sighs, Ryan agreed.

Kevin hung the phone up. “Alright, we’re gonna stop at my apartment first and then go meet my friend.” The gravity of the situation dawned on him. “Fuck, that stupid son of a bitch!”

June pointed to a parking spot a block away from his apartment. They parked the car and sat for a moment. Kevin leaned back and closed his eyes. *He’s 25 years old and smoking pot with one of his students and gets into an accident and wants ME to help him out of it? Christ, when’s he gonna grow up? Why’s he dragging me into this shit?*

“Alright, let’s go.” Kevin got out of the car and the two of them jay-walked across the street toward the apartment building.

Piecemeal June

They passed Kevin's favorite Mexican restaurant and he automatically took a look inside. A short, attractive young woman was working the front counter. She turned her head and spit, letting a huge mess of phlegm fly into the garbage can. Most of the mess hit the target but a few stray dots peppered the wall.

Without effort on his part, an image entered his mind: himself as a miniature person standing at the bottom of the garbage can being bombarded with a heavy, stinking comet of Latina phlegm that would ultimately drown him in its yellowish deluge.

June tapped his shoulder and the thought disappeared. "Hey, what's wrong?"

"Nothing, sorry." The entire situation with Ryan got to him. He looked at June and remembered their love-making; it cheered him up quite a bit. They stopped at the door to the building and saw Greg through the door to the porn shop. Kevin waved and Greg responded with a somber nod.

"What the fuck's his problem?" Kevin rolled his eyes. His cell phone rang again. He looked at it and saw that it wasn't Ryan calling as he had expected but Mushy. *Shit, I'm not in the mood to talk to him now.* He didn't pick up. *Sorry, Mushy.*

* * *

Upstairs in Kevin's apartment, Max and Pop were sitting on the couch eating out of a box of Cap'n Crunch with Crunchberries. Macchu, Pacchu, and Frank were in the kitchen going through Kevin's cabinets.

Max giggled. "Remember that bitch we picked up in Highland Park? The one with the blue hair? High as a fucking kite on meth?" He crunched down on a handful of cereal.

"Hell yeah. The shit we made her do, Christ."

"I'll tell you, you and I were drunk as hell that night but

Jordan Krall

after I looked at all the footage, man, half the shit we recorded I can't even release or I'd have lawsuits up my ass!" Max let out a fart and lifted his ass off the couch.

"Yeah, I don't remember much of what we did but I recall a dirty toilet brush. And some oysters, I remember oysters." Pop laughed so hard he almost choked on a crunchberry.

"Oysters, yeah. That little bitch had it coming, asking for meth the whole time, telling us she'll suck both our cocks. She wants to score, she better be ready to earn it!"

In the kitchen, Macchu was quiet, contemplating his role. Normally he was okay with butchering humans and sending them to the Women of the *Gati*. But for some reason, this situation was setting him on edge. Something wasn't right. His association with Max wasn't that appropriate to begin with but Macchu had already made temporary peace with that mistake.

Bacchu threw an egg beater at Macchu's head. "Think fast, fuckface." Frank and Bacchu laughed. Macchu grunted and sent a handful of spoons flying at the two of them. They ran into the living room.

"Knock it off in there, will you? You're like a bunch of children, for Christ's sake." Max shouted.

"Hey, Max," Pop said, "know what I heard? I heard that in Japan, a guy can walk into one of these shops and pick out a girl and go into a room with her and she'll sit there right in front of the guy and spit into a clear container. The guy can actually buy her fucking saliva, can you believe that?"

Max chuckled. "Yeah, I fucking believe it. Some sick people out there."

* * *

Simon straddled one of his favorite whores and found that he was

Piecemeal June

bored.

He looked down at the beautiful diseased ear that he was screwing and pulled his penis out. Leaving his harem to worry about their master, Simon left and went back to the *Orange Dukkha*.

When he got there, Latrina was getting ready to do a reading for a hermaphroditic hermit who came down from the hills only once a year. With a respectful gesture, Simon motioned the hermit to step aside and then escorted Latrina to the back room.

“I want you to do a reading, Latrina.”

She sighed and turned her back, revealing fecal whirlpool. “I don’t think you’re going to like what you see. I didn’t want to say anything...” Latrina frowned.

“I knew it!” Simon yelled.

Latrina walked toward him and put her hands on his shoulders. “Relax. I think something has to be done but I think we have to do some traveling.”

Simon’s eyes grew wide in shock. “So I was right? Something’s different.”

“After you left I had Steven take a look to find out if there was anything to do with June that we should be worried about.” She paused and looked down at her feet. “June’s dead, Simon. She killed her husband and then herself.” Latrina never withheld information even if that meant emotional devastation.

Simon stood silent, eyes filling with tears, his mind and body recalling every moment he spent with the flesh-and-blood June St. Éclair. Latrina put her mouth close to his ear. “June’s second self woke up.”

“What? But I thought...” Simon’s mouth opened in a grin. “That’s wonderful!”

Latrina kissed him on the cheek. “It’s not that simple. Let me explain...”

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

As soon as he put the key into the door, Kevin knew something was wrong. The doorknob fell limp and then dropped down the stairs. “What the hell?” The door opened and he was grabbed by the throat and thrown onto the floor. June soon followed.

Kevin looked up and saw two sleazy men and three freakish looking crab-human things. He grabbed June and pulled her close. The man with the hairy chest and gold chain around his neck spoke. “So, you’re the asshole.”

The other guy smirked and scratched his crotch. “He doesn’t look like much.”

One of the crab-things came close to Kevin and snapped a claw at him, plucking a single hair out of his head. Kevin yelped and watched as the thing took his hair and flossed its yellowish teeth with it.

“I’m Max, by the way. And these are my boys. I don’t know if June told you about us but she probably should have.”

Kevin looked at June who was looking down at the floor. “June, what’s going on?”

Max took a step closer. “Yeah, honey bunch, tell your little douche-bag friend here all about us.” He crouched down and put his face to June’s. “Tell him all the wet, sloppy moments we spent together.”

June’s hand shot up and slapped Max across the cheek, sending him backwards. Pop grabbed June by the hair and threw

Piecemeal June

her up against the couch. “Fucking cunt.” Kevin lunged for Pop’s legs but was met with a kick in the nose. Kevin’s cell phone started to ring. “Give me the phone,” Max said and when Kevin didn’t comply, he dug into his pockets and got it himself. Then he smashed it against the wall.

Kevin heard the snapping of claws as the crab-creatures taunted him. He closed his eyes. Immediately he thought of Mushy, thought of all the times he saw him get his brains beat in and how he didn’t try to talk Mushy out of it. He thought of Ryan and his now legless girlfriend. Then he heard the pitter-patter of cat feet.

From out of the bedroom Mithra came running, carrying another tarot card in his mouth. The cat dropped it at Max’s feet. “What the fuck’s this?” Max picked the card up: the *Three of Swords*.

A faint sound of rumbling came from the bathroom. It got louder and louder, a jarring din of watery commotion and metallic clanking. Max motioned for Pop. “Go check it out.”

As Pop walked with trepidation to the bathroom, a figure appeared in the front doorway. It was Mushy. “Hey Kevin, I tried calling you,” he stopped himself once his eyes took in the scene.

Max was about to order Macchu, Bacchu, and Frank to slaughter the intruder but was interrupted by the explosion: gallons upon gallons of chunky shit-water spilling out from the bathroom. Pop was carried in the mess and landed on top of June. “Get outta the way, you little bitch!” He gave June a punch in the jaw.

Mushy reacted. Despite being a fighter, he was generally a well-mannered guy. As soon as he saw that biker piece of shit punch that nice girl in the face, his blood boiled and his mind blocked out the reality of the flood of shit that just exploded from the bathroom.

Ankle-deep in bowel soup, Mushy landed punch after punch on Pop’s skull. His arthritic knuckles cracked from the

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force but Mushy kept at it, making the skull crackle and pop like a plastic Easter egg.

Chunks of Pop's skull flew across the room and landed in Mithra's litter box. He spent his last living moments thinking about his fish. *Who's gonna take care of them? They're saltwater fish. They're fragile!* And then his body and mind surrendered.

Max was stunned. Macchu, Bacchu, and Frank looked horrified as if they knew what was coming.

There was no longer a toilet in the bathroom. In its place a bald woman stood, naked and covered in brown streaks. She turned around, revealing a large swirling pit in her back. Kevin thought it looked like a big old puddle of shit.

An arm appeared out of hole. Then two arms. Then a head. A torso. Legs. A whole man squeezed out of the woman's back and plopped onto the floor. He was dressed in regal robes which were also stained with brown and black streaks. The man stood up and looked at the three crab-creatures.

"You little ingrates! I'll deal with you three later!" He pointed his finger at each of them. They scurried back with their heads down like scolded puppies. Max's jaw fell open as if he knew he was figuratively and literally in the deepest shit of his life.

Simon looked at June. "Do you remember who I am?" She looked up at him and nodded her head. There was a layer of her consciousness that knew everything about this man. She knew that for a very short time she was his Most Holy Whore. But she also knew that it wasn't completely her, that it was only some distant part and that fact was overwhelming. She sobbed into Kevin's chest.

Kevin, all things considered, was holding up pretty well. His main focus was fucking up that guy Max. *Asshole, fucking sleazy piece of shit motherfucker...* And then it dawned on him: he recognized this guy from some porno movies. Kevin remembered some videos that he saw; the degradation and misogyny

Piecemeal June

made him sick to his stomach. This was the guy. He thought of him doing those same things to June. *Fucking cocksucker.*

Simon walked into the living room and stood face to face with Max. “And you. I no longer needed your services, I dismissed you and you have the gall to use my assassins for your own purposes?” He motioned for Macchu, Bacchu, and Frank. They came out of hiding and stood behind Simon. “Max, I hope you fully understand that you’re now in a world of shit.”

Max’s eyes were bloated and fearful. His face turned red and with all of the bravery he could muster, he squeaked out one last attempt at machismo. “Fuck you.” It was barely audible.

Simon chuckled. “As King Dallas once said ‘Ask not what your body can do for you, ask what I can do with your body.’”

He put his hand on Macchu’s shoulder. “I forgive you. Now take care of this piece of *scitte*. I want him part of my harem by tomorrow morning.”

Before Max could cry out or fight, the three creatures that, earlier that morning were snuggling in bed with him, proceeded to rip him to shreds in a matter of seconds. Frank especially took great pleasure in the kill; he had always taken reservation with Max’s letting Macchu pick the restaurant they’d get take-out from.

Latrina put her hand on Simon’s shoulder. “Are we done now?” He didn’t answer. Mushy, who just got finished pounding Pop’s skull into paste, walked up to Latrina and knelt down. “Take me home, take me home, take me home, I don’t want to go to Shadow Hills, don’t want to crash, don’t want to die.” She nodded.

Simon bent over and took June by the hand. “I know you’re confused, filled with a million memories that don’t feel like your own. I want to help you make sense of it all. But you have to come back with me. You’re part of a love I once knew.” She looked him in the eyes and tried to force herself to feel as if she

Jordan Krall

had no choice in the matter. It would have made it a lot easier. But she knew that wasn't the case. She had a choice. Every one of her consciousnesses screamed to stay with Kevin.

"I'm staying, I'm sorry." She pulled her hand away. Simon turned around to Latrina, hoping for some support but was shocked at the sight of her on her hands and knees as she allowed Mushy to climb into the hole.

Simon was heartbroken. His true love had committed suicide and now the only remnant of that love was being denied to him. Normally, in his world, he would have solved things by force, by some sort of authoritarian order. Unfortunately, Simon knew that not all of his powers extended to this reality. Besides, he didn't want to take her by force. He wanted her to *want* to go. Otherwise, what was the point?

Mushy's head was peaking out of Latrina's hole. He looked over at Kevin and June. "I'm going home!" he yelled and then was completely swallowed in a brown splash.

Simon turned his back on June and Kevin. "Fine." He threw himself into Latrina who then fell into the pond of sewage that was covering the floor of Kevin's apartment. She slowly disappeared beneath the surface.

June and Kevin exchanged a tight, passionate hug. She put her plastic lips to his and breathed into his mouth. "I love you."

Though he tried not to, Kevin started crying. "I love you, too." He blubbered into her cheek. "I love you."

As if sensing the affection and wanting to be in on it, Mithra came running out and turned over, revealing his belly. Kevin rubbed the cat and continued to cry.

June wiped away his tears. "Kevin?"

"Yeah?"

"I think I'm pregnant."

EPILOGUE

The *Orange Dukkha* was filled to capacity and Simon had a front seat for the event. Steven Sigil came out into the ring and shushed the audience. “As you know, I’m well known for being somewhat of a great fortune teller. Recently, in an epiphany of even better fortune, I’ve given up that field and have taken up a new trade!” The audience jeered as Steven began to do sloppy sleight-of-hand tricks involving live clit-fish that he secured from Simon’s pond.

When he finished, the audience cheered, not in appreciation of Steven’s tricks but for the fact that they were now over. He was not aware of this. “Thank you! Thank you! Now, for the main event. Two new-comers to the Orange Dukkha. In this corner,” he motioned to his left, “standing five-foot-two and a hundred and twenty pounds, Max ‘Fish-Faced’ Alexander!”

In the corner stood a monstrosity made of both animal and human parts. Max’s face stared up from a misshapen skull, his lips pursed together as if he just ate something sour.

“And in this corner, standing six-feet-four-inches tall and weighing two hundred and fifty pounds, Mushy ‘Pop Popper’ Nebuchadnezzar!” The audience screamed and threw tiny crab shells in the ring as a show of support.

Simon sat silently, still lamenting June. Latrina came up behind him. “How’re you feeling?” He shrugged.

“How do you think?” “Oh, you’ll get over it. By the

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way,” she looked over at the ring, “I thought you were keeping Max for your harem?”

Simon couldn't help but laugh. “Yeah, well I spent all day yesterday dragging him around the east side, letting the locals face-fuck him. So I thought I'd give him a break and have Mushy have a crack at him. We'll see how it goes.” His eyes spotted someone across the room. “Oh, there he is, you want something to eat?”

Coming through the crowd was a young boy holding a large fish. The boy stuck the fish down his throat and jammed it in and out, choking himself. Mucus dribbled out of his nose and as he pulled the fish out, its mouth filled with an assortment of cheeses.

The boy made his way over to Simon's table and presented the cheese-filled fish mouth.

“Would you like a treat, sir?” The boy smiled with all the intensity of a roomful of hungry cats.

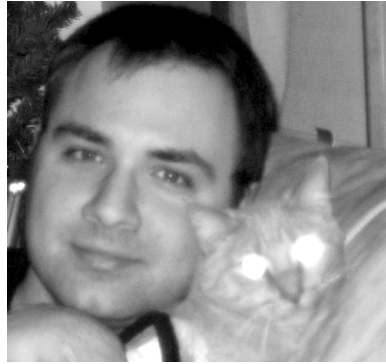
Simon leaned forward and sniffed. He sniffed again. He cleaned out his nostrils with two fingers and then sniffed a third time.

“Smells like feet.”

The boy's smile got wider.

“And your point, sir?”

THE END



Jordan Krall is a bizarre author and special education teacher. He lives in New Jersey with his wife, step-daughter, and cat. His influences include film noir, true crime, Jim Thompson, Buddhism, Elmore Leonard, and squid. When he is not reading, writing, or teaching, Jordan is watching *The Karate Kid Part III*.

Visit him online at www.filmynoir.com

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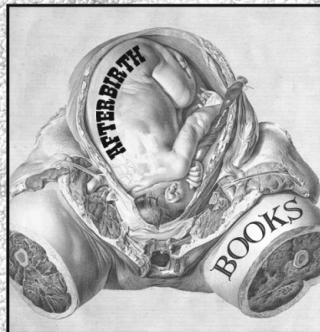
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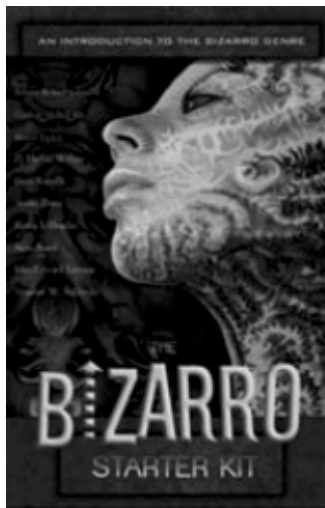


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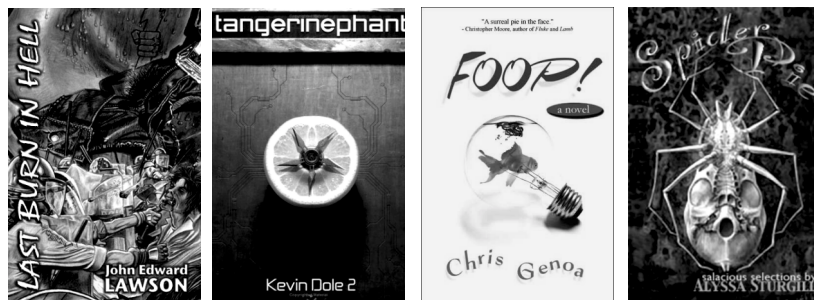


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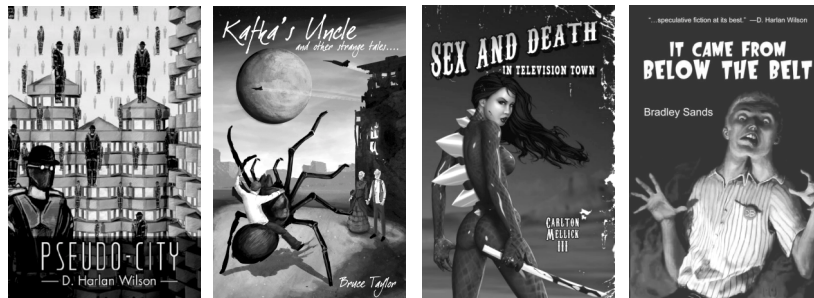


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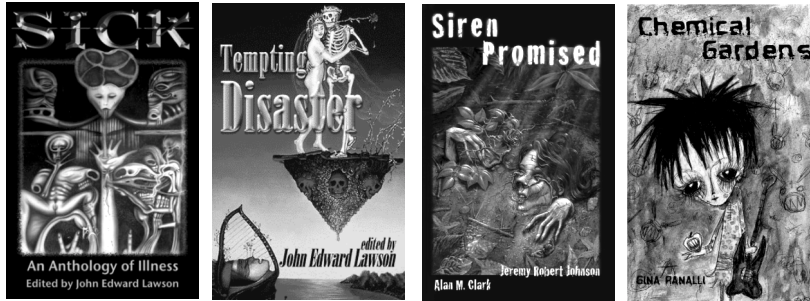


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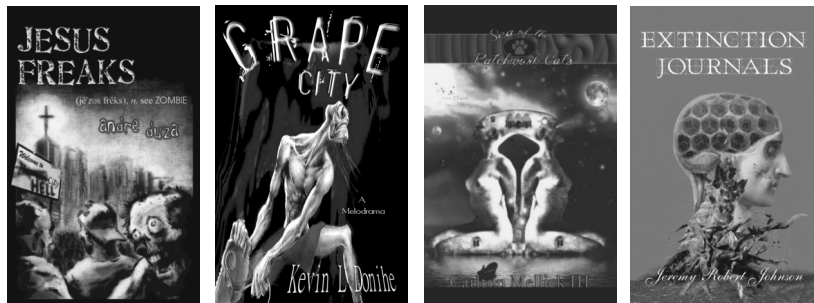


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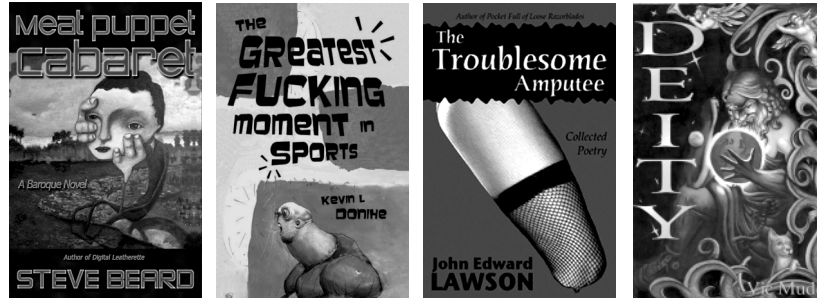


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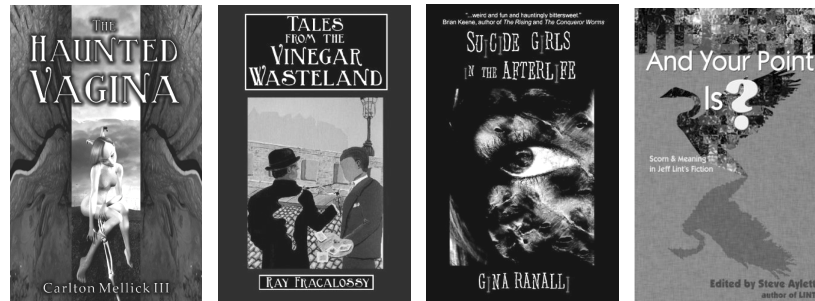


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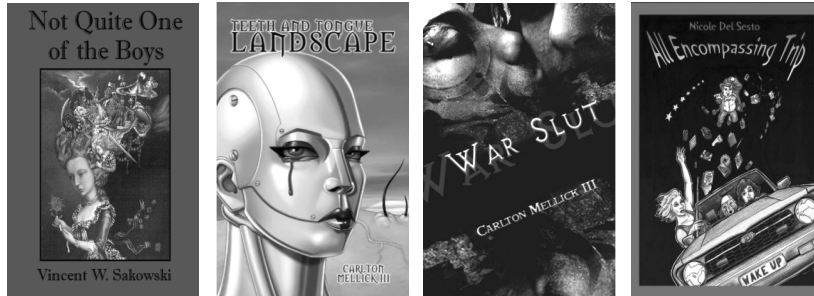


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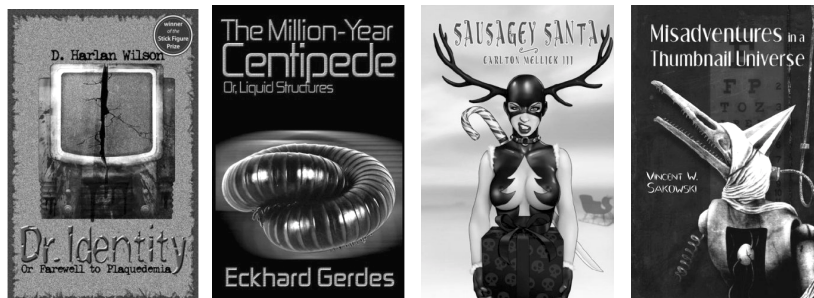


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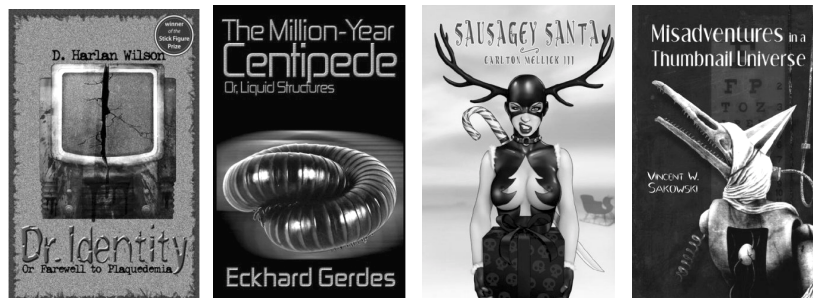


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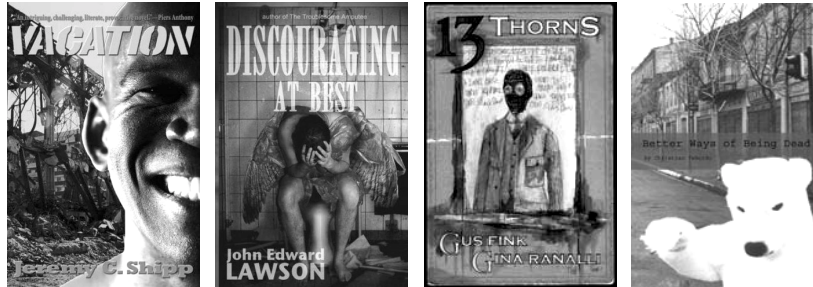


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