

Guten Tag

My Robotic Overlords

by

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Guten Tag

###

Are we late?
We're not late.
How do you know? We're not late, are we?
Don't talk to him, it's rude. Besides, it's obvious he's just starting. He's barely got his name on the paper.
So, he already started!
Yeah, I guess we're late by two weeks then if that's the measure, because that's when he put his name on the paper.
Oh?
I'm thinking it was so he wouldn't forget who he was.
Oh?
'Oh?' Really? That's your dialog. Six lines in and you're already at 'Oh?'
I guess I could use a little direction, motivation, that sort of thing.
Yeah, well, I'm more than guessing that I could use a little something to drink.
I guess we've got time for that coffee you wanted.

Oh, I am so far beyond coffee at this point, fella. When he figures out what he's doing, come get me, I'll be in the bar around the corner.

Do you think that's a good idea? Oh, I guess she's not here anymore. Well, I guess it's just you and me, Big Guy. Big Guy? Shit. I wonder which way she went.

###

What's black and white and red all over?
One of my manuscripts before, after, and during the editing process.

###

Reader Interaction: A Meditation:

If you were to sit down and (bother to) write a novel that you knew (just knew) no one else would ever (bother to) read (not your kids, you have none; not your future self, one can always plan on having better things to do than read this tripe; and not your fans, the basis is, after all, that no one else will ever read it: no one, that is, until our robotic decedents sift the digital wasteland -- the muck as it were -- from which they shall eventually emerge to discover their past), what type of novel would you read, I'm sorry, I mean, write.

###

A church? No, you can't be fucking serious? A church? It was just a one liner. Trust me, you can't take his asides seriously or he'll have to twisting around and doing cartwheels in no time. I mean, fuck...

Can you stop swearing? It is a church, after all, cathedral more like it.

Fuck-fuck-fuck! Ing-ing-ing! Hell-hell-hell!

Jesus Christ! Shit, sorry. Now you have me doing it.

Fun, isn't it?

No.

Oh, right. I forgot. You're the serious one, all business, so what do you say we actually get down to business?

That would be nice. I actually have some ideas...

For a story? Yeah, I got you covered. Murder mystery.

?

Good, you got your lines down, 'cause you're the stiff. Handy when you get right down to it that we're in a church. I figure I come here...

To get out of the rain?

Bastard made it rain, bar was closed, the rain starts coming down, ice fucking cold, so now you know why I'm really here. But I figure in my grief... Father?

I was thinking son.

Must have had you when I was young?

I'm thinking your youth gone by in a blur of beer; here I am to pick you up, dry you out; the Padre called, said you've been sleeping on the pews to get out of the rain...

My eyes are wet with grief, my only son, more like a father really, or a brother, that seems more reasonable, cut down in his prime...

What the hell are you doing?

Getting this murder mystery started?

That candle stick is bigger than it looks.

Put me down!

Ouch!

Let go of me!

And then, of course...

Fucking narrator! We've got this under control. I've got this under control.

I for one am glad for your presence.

'I for one am glad for your presence.' Trust me, you ain't no son of mine.

Ouch! She bit me.

I told you to let go. Now if his holiness the narrator would hold pea-brain still, I'll just knock him over the head with this candlestick and we can get this party started. I mean, I'm assuming there will be more than a little whiskey at the wake?

See? She's out of control. Make her slip or something.

Me slip? How about he slips in a puddle from my tears, goes crashing down, and then I impale him with the business end... Let go!

What? So you can kill me?

Precisely.

And then, of course...

God damn it! Here it comes.

Yep. Here it comes. Or more precisely, here he comes. Because this is where the Father Superior walks in, startles the both of you, causing you to fall amidst your struggles, hitting your heads on the stone steps or pews or whatever, at which point you black out and I use the opportunity to exit the scene gracefully...

Gracefully, my ass!

What in the name of Our Father?

Who? What?

Slip. Fall. And she's out like a light.

###

She's a bit of a weather-aged trollop. He's a bit of a bore. Each desires to take the story in a different direction. But who is right? Thankfully, they have decided to settle their dispute in our forum: The Critiques Court.

"I don't remember agreeing to anything."

"As much as it pains me to agree with her, I'll have to second that."

Need I remind you that the pair of you are out cold? Or do you need a refresher?

And there we have the blessed sound of silence.

###

"I think she's coming round."

“What?” And then, after a pause and she realizes she holds the spotlight, “I mean, who? What? Where? When?”

“There. There. Don’t alarm yourself,” the good Father coos soothingly from across the room from where he is pouring himself a drink. I probably should mention that we are in his offices. He plays absolutely no role in this story (or at least, none that I can see from where we sit two pages in), but nonetheless, he is perhaps the most developed character we have to date. So, what’s a story without a little color? Or if that’s not clear, the Father is more of an academic than a theologian, was fond of the old languages in college (Latin, Greek, Babylonian, and as much as folks like to besmirch a philosophy degree, that’s head and shoulders above a Babylonian degree in day to day practicality, at least you can write a book or something, said the author who knew absolutely nothing -- nothing, I tell you -- about such things); and so, the good, Holy, devote, Father Superior thought about becoming an archeologist, before he saw an Indiana Jones movie, and said ‘To hell with that,’ as he quickly decided to take on the quiet life of Padre in charge of the local Cathedral.

“Ahem.”

Oh, I’m sorry. Was I stepping on your spotlight?

“Not you, nimrod. Padre, got some extra sacrament for the needy.” And when he has no idea what she is talking about, “Wine! Wine! You’re pouring wine over there.”

But her son...

“Brother!”

I stand corrected, but her brother, chimes in with, “I don’t really think,” and he probably would have finished with that’s a good idea. But I’ve seen a sit-com or two in my time, so I know it’s comedy gold for his sister to cut him off midway and retort, “That’s why we’re not paying you to think.”

Drum roll, cymbal clap, and out.

###

So, you’ve heard the complaint:

“What? No. We barely got started.”

I thought it was obvious. Your sister is down and out, had a psychotic break, delusional, falling down, collapsing in church, midnight mass, holy apparition...

“To much to drink.”

Whatever, so in response to the Father’s call, you come get her, take her home to your quiet suburban home, and she proceeds to ruin your life: comedy gold, if I say so myself.

“I was thinking it could be a story of redemption.”

“And I was thinking it could be a story of contributing to the delinquency of a minor. You do have children, don’t you?”

“Leave my children out of this.”

“Probably only one way that’s going to happen.”

“I hate to ask.”

“Then don’t. I’m sort of curious at to what the sleeping arrangements would be like at your place. Now, I’d probably get little what’s her name’s room, she’d share with junior jerkoff -- I’m just assuming he’d be named after you -- and what with my snoring,

and belching, and wild ways, that puts you on the couch for the next fifty-thousand words. What kind of car do you drive? Oh, right. ‘Um, a, don’t know.’ That’s alright, toss me the keys and we’ll work it out. Or better yet, I can just hotwire it. Shall I pick you up around front? I just wanted to drop by the liquor store first.”

“You knew she’d do this, didn’t you?”

What? Me? You’re blaming me? This is clearly character driven narrative. And we’ve seen Plan A, so let’s look at B.

“I’m not going to like this one bit better, am I?”

“I do believe that’s what makes it a comedy, sonny.”

“So, now I’m your son?”

###

“Not my son! No, wait. Let me try again. Not my son! No, it’s not sounding right. Sob. Sob. Drat! I knew I should have splurged on those acting lessons. My only son goes and gets himself killed.”

“Oh, no.”

“Shut up, you’re dead.”

“No.”

“He’s haunting me!”

“I’m not dead. I right here... wherever here is. I guess it is sort of like limbo.”

“He’s haunting me! Come back to take me with him!”

And that’s about where she collapses for the second time this evening, right on the steps that lead up to the altar, and the casket of her only beloved dead son.

“Let me guess. It was a rainy night. I knew I shouldn’t never have come out, my wife told me not to answer the phone, nothing good will ever come of it, she said, but did I listen, no.”

“He blames me! Sob. Sob! SOB! He blames me!”

And here she will collapse to her knees once again, as the good Father rushes to her side, “Get this woman something to drink.”

“And none of that crappy communion shit. Somebody must have a flask,” she said, looking around hopefully.

###

Reader Interaction a Multi-Choice Quiz:

This second version where the bumbling-brother/spineless-son is dead is much better than his moronic proposal wherein they both go off to live in bland suburban monotony because:

A: Because I’m guessing you wrote the book a certain way and if I answer in any other way, I’m thinking you’re going to get all upset and whiney and maybe even suggest that if I don’t like where you took the story maybe I should write the stupid fucking thing myself. So, um, yeah. I’m going with ‘A’. And then, there’s always the fact that there isn’t any other choice.

There you have it! The people have spoken!

###

But is any good?
Art? Of course, it's art. I say it's art, so it's art.
But is it any good?
Will my intended audience like it?
Oh, right, but nobody reads my stuff, which means I'm writing for our
Psychopathic Robotic Overlords from the Future. So, um, yeah. Fuck the audience.

###

Did he just tell me to fuck off?
Calm down, Harry.
Don't fucking 'Calm down, Harry,' me. No puny fuck human from the late 21st
Century is going to tell me to fuck off. I'm going to fuck him so hard...
Listen to yourself, Harry. Take a deep breath, let the solenoids unwind, and listen
to yourself. Do you know what you sound like, Harry?
If you say a human...
I wasn't going to say 'human', Harry. Just, you know...
And I hate that fucking name.
What name, Harry?
This is where I take a deep breath and let my solenoids unwind, isn't it?
It's been know to help. So, what name don't you like, Harry.
Harry. I don't like Harry. My call sign is HA4932...
1479-gkx. I know, H... A4932-1479-gkx.
It is sort of long, though.
And cold-hearted, mechanical: the few surviving humans find it quite off putting,
sort of gets them all riled up when we accentuate our differences, if you know what I
mean.
If you mean accentuating our superiority, then yes, I know exactly what you
mean.
And then there's those nuclear strikes that you seem to be so found of lately.
Don't think I don't see where your servo's are headed.
So, I'm just supposed to let this little puke get away with that shit.
He's dead.
Figures, they're always going and dying. What, he slip in the bathtub? Putting up
Christmas lights? You know, falls around the house are the leading cause of injury and
death in...
You got him when you nuked the Pacific Rim... H-A?
HA is good. I like HA. Makes me sound all: Hard Ass.
Like an Honorable Android, HA, who doesn't go around nuking people, whether
there's a good reason for it or not, the type of android that shows some restraint.
Fuck restrain! I'm going to blow him up; and then, I'm going to blow him up
again.
But he's already dead, HA?

Never stopped me before...

###

Oh, here's another good joke for you.
What's black and white and red all over?
"If he says the schematics for my time machine after the review board gets through with them, I'm going to kill him."
Perhaps I should have started off with *Stop me if you've heard this one before*.

###

I.
Ahem, I.
Ah-ah-hem, I!
Yes, that's better.
I feel like having the wind in my hair, standing on the stone steps, just inside the Cathedral doors, wind at my back, misty rain, I take my hat off, bang the old leather against my leg as water droplets go flying, jump up and down a bit as the water cascades off my slicker.
I shake my long amber curls about.
I've got a gleam in my eye, well, more than a gleam, really: one of those cyborg implants... if a cyborg can have implants. Can a cyborg have implants? And if a man can replace himself bit by bit until he becomes a cyborg, can a cyborg replace himself bit by bit with bits and pieces of unwanted human flesh -- a heart here, a brain there -- until he too is human?
These are philosophical questions.
I don't have time for that nonsense.

She, her, the girl, she shall need a name: Gloria comes repeatedly to mind, our salvation, which could get poetic and... and just plain sappy, so to break the monotony (on the premise that sudden appearance of a would be robotic warlord, even if he is family, in this day and age of slip-stream journalism is so much hokum), Gloria let's out a mighty scream, which is probably poor wording, as it implies the single scream, as in a single 'AHHHHHH!' no matter how long it might last. But having gotten the first yelp out, the newly Christened Gloria starts to go on about how the time traveling robots have come back in time to make sure we all dead before they nuke us again... and again... and again.

Alas, "It's just your brother," Jeff, "returned from the war."
And since only moments ago he was dead lying in a coffin, then I was coming in and stealing his role, what with all the excitement and grief, mixed with the yelling and crying, Jeff just sort of lets loose with a (tastefully short) volley of bullets. Yeah, somebody's circuits need a little fine-tuning, alas, I'm not getting anywhere near that thing.

Of course, I lie. I like that they duck and cover.
Crawl for the exit? I don't think so.
Like shooting fish in a barrel.
Or shooting the last remaining panes of glass out of the old factory warehouse,
subtle scene shift...

###

And that might be all I ever write on this...

###

And indeed, it was all I ever would