



SCUM

27 APR "YOU SOUND LESS, AND LESS, APPEALING THE MORE THAT I GET TO KNOW YOU, BILTA, YO", I REPLY, "LIKE... DO YOU EVER THINK THINGS THROUGH?"

"but, why, boss?", bilta replies as he pedals the digital.unicycle past me, "i think that it's cool as fuck, yo."

"It's not the unicycle, Bilta", I reply as I roll my eyes, "it's that you are still wearing your green polka dot jumpsuit—*do you ever change your clothes?*"

"it fits well."

"So would my five fingers, in your face", I reply as I shrug, "I guess—*if, that's your thing? Whatever.*"

i pause; i put my foot on the ground; i adjust the main.gear on my mountain.bike, "it's not going into gear, that well."

"Try the other gear", Bilta replies as he stops and puts his feet on the ground, "you may need to put some oil on

the chain—*I've had that problem before, yo.*"

"yeah, whatever—it will be fine."

I sigh; I adjust my helmet; I reach down into my digital bag and pull out a small granola bar; I open the wrapper; the fucking crumbs get everywhere—*like fucking always.* I sigh; I take a bite; moments later, I put the last remaining bite into my mouth; I look down at my pants; *they're a mess!*

"so like", i continue talking to bilta as i turn my head to him, "we going to do the advanced single-track today or just do a couple laps around the pond?"

"I don't know", he replies as he zips up his black hoodie, "what if we compromised and did a lap around the pond and then

one time did the single-track, yo?"

"Compromising is for losers", I reply as I roll my eyes, "you do your routine—*I'll do mine.*"

i pause; i take a sip of my cold soda through the plastic tube; i reach back and readjust the digital.small.backpack.

"Hey", I continue speaking to Bilta as I turn on the digital light on my bike, "we'll meet up at the cafe at 14 hours."

"Yeah, whatever, boss—*if it takes you that much time to do a lap your coffee is going to be cold.*"

"my fist in your face won't be, bilta", i reply as put my foot on the pedal.

Moments later, I turn around the first bend by the pond; I

get a beep on my digital.tele-
phone that Bilta has completed
the first lap around the
single-track dirt course; I smile;
slacker, yo. I push down harder
on the digital.pedal, the moun-
tain bike abruptly stops; I look
down at the chain caught in the
spokes; *I roll my eyes—it's never
easy, yo.*

I put my foot on the hard blue
grass; I bend down and readjust
the digital.caliper; I sigh; I wipe
the river of sweat from my brow;
we should be doing this at night.

My phone beeps; *a new message
has come in from Bilta.*

“boss—i have a problem.”

I sigh; *it's always something with
this dude.*

Yeah—*what's up, yo?*

**moments later, my phone
beeps that a response
has come in from bilta; i
look down at my phone.**

You're *a loser—and, slow.*

I sigh; *if you are going to shit talk,
then, at least, be good at it, yo.*

**i roll my eyes; i start
typing the response.**

“It's not the speed, that, you
go—*it's—who finishes.*”

**28 APR “PRO-TIP #3: YO—DON'T BE YOURSELF SO
MUCH, BILTA”, I CONTINUE SPEAKING AS I SIP MY COF-
FEE, “BE SOMEONE ELSE—SOMEONE DIFFERENT.”**

**“someone better?”, he
replies as i adjust my
small.bag on my moun-
tain.bike.**

“No”, I say as I roll my eyes, “I
don't think that you can do that—
just different. Outside your
comfort zone, sometimes.
Consider that you are always
*you—sometimes, let it go, to be
different.* Not better—*not the
same.*”

**“um”, he responds as he
turns his head to look at
the setting sun, “can you
explain? possibly with an
example?”**

“I'm not going to draw a
diagram—this time. But, some-
times—*let go, a little, to change
how uptight that you normally are.*
Like, when no one is watching—*be
that way sometimes when people
see you.* It's ok, if people don't
think that you are normal—*fuck
it? Who cares!*”

**“is this about my green
polka dot jumpsuit?”**

“Absolutely! Why do you insist

on putting neon lights on it? It's strange, weird and abnormal—*it's great*. For very limited amounts of time. You know—*if you keep doing it, it gets boring*. But, like... if it's just here and there—*it's ok*. It's actually interesting, yo.”

“you like the neon lights on my green polka dot jumpsuit, yo?”

“Let's not mince words, Bilta—*no*. But, sometimes, it is a distraction from the monotony of everything—*at times, it's interesting and a nice change from the norm*.”

“so, boss”, he replies as he grimaces and turns his head back to me, “you still didn't answer the question—where are your pants, yo?”

“Oh”, I respond as I look down at the hard blue grass, “so... I went for a swim in the pond and when I got out of the water my clothes were gone—*so, do you think that I can*

borrow your green polka dot jumpsuit until I get home to change, yo?”

“I think”, Bilta replies as he shakes his head, “that you made up this story to borrow my sweet-ass jumpsuit.”

“hardly, bilta—hardly.”

“You say these things, boss”, he replies as he opens his backpack, “but, I don't think that you really know what you are talking about.”

“bilta—when it comes to talking about things that i know nothing about”, i pause; i want to say something funny and come off as being super awesome.

I take a sip of soda through the plastic tube.

“Bilta”, I continue speaking as I shuffle on my mountain bike, “when it comes to talking about things that I know nothing about—*I don't*.”

“you make up too many excuses, boss.”

“You make a target for my fist in your face.”

“if you talk to me that way”, he replies as he hands me the jumpsuit, “you can't borrow my badass green polka dot jumpsuit with neon lights—yo.”

“I would probably not call that a bad thing.”

“You would probably not call anything”, he replies as he zips up his backpack, “because I would stop answering your calls.”

“you'll always be here for me, bilta”, i reply as i shrug, “i control you—yo.”

“You control your mouth with my five fingers.”

28 APR “BILTA—I FEEL LIKE YOU ARE ALWAYS ON THE EDGE TO SNAP”, I CONTINUE SPEAKING AS I SIGH, “YO—IT SUCKS; IT’S MY, SHITTY, DAILY EXERCISE ROUTINE.”

“it’s not my fault that you keep complaining, boss”, bilta replies as he shuffles in his plastic recliner in the cafe by the beach, “you know what it’s like to always be around you—it’s the absolute worst, yo!”

“You’re going to be around five fingers, in your face, if you keep talking to me that way, Bilta”, I reply as I roll my eyes, “if I had a dollar for every time that I held back—you *wouldn’t need to buy coffee again because I would buy it all.*”

“you talk too much.”

“You don’t shut up.”

I sigh; Bilta sighs; the waiter comes over and places a fresh plate of biscottis on our table.

“on the house”, she replies as she turns

around and takes a step to leave.

I reach forward and grab one; Bilta does the same; I turn my head to look out the window; *I could go for a hot dog.*

“Hey Bilta—you *want to go grab a hot dog, yo?*”

“i could definitely go for a hot dog!”

“I don’t doubt it.”

“What was that?”, Bilta replies as he turns his head back to me.

“oh!”, i respond as i sigh, “nothing—it was nothing, yo.”

I take a bite of the biscotti; *freshly baked is the best!*

“So”, I continue speaking to

Bilta as I put my feet on the small wooden table, “did you want to go, right now?”

“now or never, boss!”, he replies as he leans forward and grabs another biscotti, “these are great—i love when they come to the table hot.”

“So’s your girlfriend”, I reply as I shrug, “but anyways... so like—*right now or you be fine waiting an hour?*”

“I don’t really care”, Bilta responds as he turns his head to look out the window, “I’m not hungry—*these are good.*”

i pause; i take another bite; yeah, they are.

“So Bilta”, I continue speaking as I pick up my coffee, “I’m thinking of buying another velociraptor—a *lady velociraptor, yo.*”

Bilta leans forward.

“I’m listening”, he replies as he starts tapping his claw on the table, “you want to explain your thoughts, a little more.”

“Well—you *seem* lonely. I’m tired of babysitting you—I *got shit and shit to do*. I’m thinking that your plan to go out and meet velociraptors and make friends isn’t working that well. I did some research and they are releasing a new IHSBSM velociraptor model next week.”

I pause; I take another bite of the biscotti; *I don’t eat these enough, yo.*

“and”, i continue speaking as i lean back, “i think that you’ve really helped out a lot with these projects and made me a ton of money—so maybe i can pay you back by getting another velociraptor; a companion for you.”

“That sounds great”, he replies as he leans back and smiles.

“It’s kinda creepy when you smile”, I continue speaking, “but, let’s not count chickens... anyways, it sounds like you are game for the plan, yo.”

i pause; i take a sip of coffee.

“In that case—I’ll get her next week.”

29 APR “NO, BILTA—I CAN’T TALK, RIGHT NOW: THE DIGITAL TOILET EXPLODED IN MY HOUSE AND I’M IN THE MIDDLE OF A MESS OF... YOU KNOW, YO.”

“it’s just one coffee”, he replies over the digital telephone.

Why do I answer the phone?, I think to myself as I pace in my kitchen.

i pick up the coffee pot; i pour a cup of coffee; there’s not enough fucking coffee, yo.

“You know”, I reply as I roll my eyes, “everyone says one coffee—we’ll meet for one coffee. I can’t—I have other things to do called *not meeting you for coffee*. I would love to—I *love coffee*. Truly, if you want to get together, just say that word: I’ll never say *no*. But, this time, and, specifically with you, Bilta—I *just can’t*. I have too much respect for myself—*after you said that my purple trucker hat looked goofy, I decided that enough is enough*. I won’t stand for your abuse.”

“i’ll buy biscottis, also.”

“Fuck your biscottis, Bilta”, I yell as I hang up my digital telephone; *we should do more text messages or enjoy the absence of others more.*

i pause; i pick up my coffee mug; i take a sip; it’s quite delicious—not overly, but... it’s pretty good.

I look at the taza in my hand; *I love you, coffee.*

Thanks, Jamie!

i gasp; i forgot that i programmed the mug to speak.

Jamie—what do you want to do, today?

Oh-my-God—I think to myself as I slam the mug on the kitchen table—how do I turn off the digital.speak from the taza—it’s so fucking creepy, yo.

i fumble over the small keypad on the handle of the mug; i press the digital.code: 7394. the lights on the mug shut off; i wipe my brow; not doing that again!

I pick up my coffee; I take a sip.

“You want to keep talking, yo?”, I ask the mug.

nothing happens.

“Good”, I continue speaking as I turn my head to look out the window; *there’s twelve hummingbirds gathered around the feeder... what a strange anomaly?*

I pause; I take another sip of coffee.

anyways.

“Hey dad”, HR exclaims as she enters the kitchen, “you want to

go on a mystery where you buy me a new backpack for school, yo?”

“I got a better idea”, I reply as I shrug, “how about you pretend that I’m with you—like... *pretend that I am there with you.*”

i take another sip of coffee.

“I do that all the time with your mom when I’m mad at her”, I continue speaking as I sigh, “I pretend that I’m having a conversation with her—*it’s called role playing.* We, I, have a whole conversation without her *with her* and it helps me make sense of the chaos of our lives—*it also helps me to make sense of myself.* From these conversations, I often can see what is going on in my head—*from there, I can make better decisions.*”

i like to think that we are having a whole conversation—from there, i can make better decisions.

Ultimately, I like to think that working things out *on my own* is the best way to work things out *together*, yo. If I can find peace with myself, then your mom and I have more peace, together.”

I turn my head from the birdfeeder to HR.

i look around the kitchen.

“Where the fuck did she go?”

29 APR “UNLIKE YOU, BILTA, BLOGGING DOESN’T SUCK; IT’S NOT LAME; AND, IT’S SOMETHING THAT I GREATLY ENJOY IN MY LIFE, YO”, I CONTINUE DIGITAL.THINKING.

“children—children”, she exclaims as she walks in to the living room in my house.

“You arrived!”, I exclaim as I jump off the sofa.

“Who is she”, Bilta replies as he opens his mouth and starts to droll.

she turns her head to him.

“Your worst nightmare, Bilta”, she replies as she punches him in the face, “I’m the new digital.companion for Jamie.”

She turns her head to me; she smiles; I smile.

“you got here early, dontu.”

“It’s actually *Dóntü*.”

“Yeah, whatever”, I reply as I roll my eyes, “you already sound lame, yo.”

she punches me in the face; bilta smiles; i fall backwards into the couch.

“There’s a new digital.sheriff in town, boys”, Dontu replies as she starts shooting coffee from her left hand into my

mug on the table, “would you like it with whole milk and natural sugar, asshole?”

I shrug; maybe—*she’s ok?*

“yeah—i’ll give it a chance, yo.”

She turns her head to Bilta; he pauses.

“So”, Bilta replies as he slowly sits down in the plastic recliner, “I guess that this is the new velociraptor that you ordered, yo?”

“yeah”, i respond as i turn my head to him, “we all make mistakes, bilta.”

He sighs; I smile; she starts filling up his cup on the small wooden table with soda.

“Would you like a couple ice cubes, Bilta?”, she speaks as the liquid sprays from her right hand, “the soda is hot, yo.”

bilta sighs; she smiles; i shrug.

“Yeah, whatever, Dontu”, he replies as he shuffles in his chair.

“So”, I quickly interject to break the tension, “this is

your new companion—*think of her as a teammate, Bilta*. She’s going to be helping us with projects; she’ll make jokes, occasionally—*that’s how she’s programmed*. I saw in the description on the website that she is also a master of the karate of the flying leg sweep so you probably don’t want to fuck with her, too much, yo.”

bilta turns his head to me.

“Boss”, he replies as he grimaces, “I have a confession to make—*I think that I’m in love*.”

“Yeah, ok?”, I continue speaking as I pick up my coffee, “that and a couple bucks will buy you a cheap hamburger.”

i take a sip of my coffee.

“Hey Dontu—*the coffee is cold*.”

“Tough break, boss”, she replies as she scurries over to the other plastic recliner, “that’s a sad story—*would you like a napkin to cry into?*”

i pause; she’s kinda snarky—maybe, i made a mistake, yo.

“Um... *it will be, somewhat, kinda, ok*.”

“ok, boss”, she responds as she

shuffles in her chair.

I turn my head from Bilta to Dontu; what-the-fuck do I do with two useless velcoiraptors?

“so dontu”, i turn my head to bilta, “and, bilta—we have a new mystery on planet kdnc

that needs urgent attention and the utmost respect.”

Dontu sighs; I turn my head to her.

“Dontu”, I continue speaking as I take another sip of my coffee, “did you have something interesting to say or a question to ask?”

she turns her her to bilta; back to me; she opens her mouth and then closes it.

“Yeah”, she replies as she looks at the small wooden table, “can you return me, yo? This is already, really, boring.”

29 APR 50/50 RULE OF DEALING WITH, SOME, ABNORMAL AVERAGES & UNTIMELY CHOICES: A, RATHER, BRIEF HISTORY OF NATIVE POPULATIONS STARTING W/ A AND Q

“no”, i reply as i shake my head, “i haven’t read that book, yo.”

“You suck”, Bilta responds as he puts the masking tape on the cardboard box, “it’s pretty good—really, got me thinking about things and stuff.”

“that’s interesting—i guess—if you are a

loser, yo.”

“Why do you keep talking that way, boss”, he replies as he grabs the digital.sharpie, “just let it go.”

“you keep talking about my purple trucker hat as if i have no feelings”, i respond as i grab the digital.scale, “who do

you think i am—a monster?”

“You know—if you would just listen to me for a second, you would realize that I am trying to help, yo.”

“If I listened to you for a moment, I would end up punching myself in the face—that’s how boring you are, Bilta.”

*“some of my jokes are funny?”
he replies as he sighs.*

“Yeah—the ones you don’t tell.”

I chuckle; I should be a comedian or some shit.

“anyways, bilta”, i continue speaking as i sigh, “let me just weigh the package to calculate the shipping. we’ll go grab a pizza later, yo.”

“It was a bad idea to buy her”, he replies as he takes a sip of his coffee, “you should think these things through better.”

“You live and you learn—some things work out; some things don’t.”

“you should have known”, he responds as he sets the coffee mug on the kitchen table, “it was obvious—it even said on the website that she is programmed to be snarky, aggressive

and a pain-in-the-ass.”

“Yeah—you know—I never read those warnings, yo.”

I shrug; Bilta sighs; the box moves a little.

“did you take out the batteries, bilta?”, i continue speaking as i turn my head to him and roll my eyes.

“Yeah”, he replies as he turns his head to the box, “of course—I think, maybe; sometimes; probably not, yo.”

*I sigh; I pull the masking tape off the top of the box; I reach my hand in; I open the small digital.cover marked *power supply*; I flip the switch to *off* and remove the small digital.battery; I turn my head to Bilta as I sigh and roll my eyes.*

“you had one job, bilta”, i reply as i place the small digital.packaging on the table, “try to pay attention, next time—loser.”

Bilta sighs; I roll my eyes; I grab the masking tape and reapply it to the box; Bilta hands me the return label; I place it on the top; moments later, I put it in the mailbox outside my front yard; 0.3293764 nanoseconds later, the mailman arrives and picks up the box.

“Have a great day, Jamie!”, he exclaims as he opens the front cover of the mailbox and picks up the package with his digital.rubber gloves.

“thanks kwmsm”, i reply as i wave to him, “tell the family that i said hi!”

Moments later, 0.939474 nanoseconds later, to be exact, he gets back in his spacevehicle; the machine lifts off the ground; he elevates; moments after that, the spacevehicle turns around and propels forward; moments beyond that, I can’t see the space.vehicle anymore.

i turn my head back to bilta.

“I’m not buying any more shit off the internet.”

30 APR BREAKING NEWS: TWO, RELATIVELY, NORMAL PEOPLE, SOMEWHAT, ARE DOING NOTHING, AS-USUAL, INTERESTING IN A BORING, INCREDIBLY, NOTHING TOWN, YO

“thanks, tom”, the digital.reporter replies as the screen flashes to bright blue.

“Here’s Susan with the weather report”, the announcer speaks as the image of a palm tree shows up on the digital TV.

i reach over for the digital.remote on the small wooden table in front of me; i pick it up; i turn off the tv; i turn my head to bilta.

“You want to get into an adventure today, Bilta?”

“Does it involve hotdogs?”

“only if you play your cards right”, i reply as i

pick up my coffee.

I take a sip; *it’s good—not as tasty as Dontu’s coffee that came out of her right hand, but, you know, all things accounted for, it’s alright.*

“So”, I continue speaking to Bilta as I put my feet up on the table, “what are you thinking, yo?”

“you like baseball?”

“You like a punch in the face?”

“Ok”, he replies as he grimaces, “let me think... what about soccer?”

“i would be happy to also kick some balls.”

“Ok? That doesn’t sound right”, he replies as he shrugs,

“in that case, we’re going fishing, again?”

“Fuck it? Why not?”

“i’m tired of fishing”, he replies as he rolls his eyes, “it’s all you fucking want to do—consider getting a life, boss.”

“Consider me making you a sandwich of five fingers to the face.”

Bilta pauses; I pause; I pick up the remote; I turn the TV back on.

“and”, the announcer speaks as the picture of the tuna fish sandwich is shown, “that is why i never put my finger in

the mayonaise.”

“That’s interesting”, I say to Bilta as I turn my head to him, “I never would have thought of that?”

He rolls his eyes.

“the mayonaise?”

“No”, I reply as I shrug, “that two normal, ordinary, people could do nothing—I feel like there is always a story, yo.”

“the story is that you don’t stop talking, boss.”

“Here me out, Bilta”, I continue speaking as I pick up my coffee, “what if it’s all just two average people doing average things in average places—*that sounds news worthy.*”
“It sounds boring.”

“maybe—that’s the point?”, i reply as i turn my head to look at the bird feeder out the window; six humming birds, today.

“So”, I continue speaking as I turn my head back to Bilta, “what if there’s really not any news worthy stories beyond the mundane monotony of what we call the norm?”

“Are you doing drugs, boss?”

“i wish—but, no.”

I pause; I take a sip of my coffee; *it’s delicious... but, not overly. Just right... but, not that great.*

“Anyways, Bilta”, I continue speaking as I yawn, “why are

you here, again?”

“um...”, he replies as he rolls his eyes and shrugs, “you called me that you had an emergency and to come, right over, immediately.”

I pause; *did I do that, yo?*

“Oh?”, I shrug, “yeah—I, *just, must have made that up.* Anyways... great to know that you would come so quickly if I called you. If this was an actual emergency, it’s great to know that I have a friend like you—*I value our friendship.*”

“i do, too”, bilta replies as he smiles.

“Shut up, Bilta”, I quickly reply, “I was talking to the TV.”

30 APR “TRUE”, I REPLY TO BILTA AS I CAST MY LURE INTO THE POND, “YOU KNOW—GAZE INTO THE ABYSS SOMETIMES TO SEE WHAT YOU FIND; MAKE A WISH.”

**“does it work, boss?”,
bilta asks as he takes
a bite of his hotdog,
“like... is that what you
do, yo?”**

“No”, I continue speaking as I sigh, “but... it takes the edge off. It’s a lot of pressure to keep writing—*sometimes, it’s nice to let go and take things out of your hands.*”

“literally?”

“It’s just a figure of speech”, I reply as I start turning the crank, “you just need to relax on the constant pull of controlling everything; sometimes you have to stop.”

“What?”

**“your mouth”, i continue
as i roll my eyes, “you
need to learn to stop
talking—don’t start
doing. just be—do
nothing.”**

“How do I do that?”

“Well—*you appear to be great at doing the opposite.* For a moment, don’t be yourself—*be me.*”

“how do i do that, yo?”

“You tell me—*you seem to be*

*staring at me, long enough,
while I try to fish.*”

I pause; I sigh; I roll my eyes; I turn my head to Bilta.

“Grab a pole and some bait.”

**bilta bends down and
picks up the fly fishing
rod off the ground; he
looks around.**

“I don’t see any bait, here, boss.”

“You don’t want to use bait if you are using that rod—use a small fly. Look in the tackle box for the digital.mosquito. Those work well, here, in this pond—*you should be able to catch sometime with that.* If it doesn’t work, at least, it is cheap—*I’m not worried about that one, yo.*”

**bilta turns around;
moments later, he
opens the box; he scans
the contents; he picks
up the lure.**

“Not that one, Bilta”, I reply as I shrug, “do I have to do everything for you? Try a *different one.*”

**he scans the top shelf;
he grabs a small
plastic.digital.worm.**

“Yeah”, I continue speaking as I watch him fumble to tie the treble hook onto the fishing line, “that’s not going to work—*but, just use that one, right now.* You’ll get the hang of it—at least, *you can see how we do it.*”

I shrug; *fucking amateur, yo.*

**“so—you are going to
cast the lure into the
water near the fallen
tree branch.”**

I point to the muddy water.

“Try to land it close”, I continue speaking as I roll my eyes, “but... not too close where you snag it and it gets caught up, yo. Try a little on our side—*there should be a good bass in that area.* They love the early morning—*who knows? Maybe, you will catch something, Bilta?*”

**i chuckle; you never
know?**

Bilta swings the fishing pole back and slings it forward; he lets go of the button; the lure arcs through the air; it lands directly on the tree branch in the water.

**“you’re a fucking
amateur, bilta.”**

“Well”, he replies as he shrugs,

“at least, I tried. You can’t catch anything if you never put a line in the water.”

“You’re going to catch five fingers of small mouth trout in your kisser”, I reply as I roll

my eyes, “if you say stupid shit like that again, yo.”

bilta shrugs; i shrug; he starts reeling in the line; it catches on a

fallen tree branch; he pulls; the line snaps.

“See”, I continue speaking as I shake my head, “this is why we should just go grab coffee.”

30 APR “YOU’RE A MAJOR LOSER, YO; YOU’RE RUDE; SOMEWHAT CRUDE; BAD BODY ODOR”, I RETORT, “WE DON’T WANT YOU, JUST, LIKE, RANDOMLY OUT THERE SOMEWHERE.”

“So I’m fired, again?”, he replies as he starts to sulk, “I really need this job.”

“of course!”, i continue speaking as i sip my coffee in the cafe by the beach, “that’s why i have more work for you.”

I pause; I look out the window; *it’s packed today.*

“So anyways—*this time, you are going to Planet ODMCN.* You

want to bring some sunscreen: for this mission—*you are going to sell digital.toasters at the beach.*”

“that sounds quite random, yo”, he replies as he shrugs, “but... what-ever?”

“Yeah—*so, like, we’ve been hired to do in-person and in-depth market research.* The company DOSLK has asked me to go setup a stand to gauge the impact of their new digital font and digital.color.scheme to the general public. You

are going to just sit in a chair with some toasters, or some shit, and see what people say. Don’t ask—*just listen to the reaction of people as they pass by the toaster stand.*”

“i can do that!”, he replies as he starts to smile.

“Doubtful”, I retort as I sip my coffee, “but, all the same... we don’t have anyone else to send, at the moment.”

“You said we again, boss”, Bilta

inquires as he turns his head towards the waiter.

“it’s how it goes, bilta—we talk that way, yo.”

“Whose *we*”, he asks again as he turns his head back to me.

“ask your girlfriend”, i reply as i chuckle.

“You’re such an asshole, boss”, Bilta replies as he puts his hand in the air to wave for the waiter to come over.

“If I had a dollar”, I reply as I gaze at the digital bartender, “I would probably not be in this place, yo.”

“in the cafe?”

“With my fist in your face”, I say as I turn my head back to him.

“Yeah”, Bilta speaks to the waiter, “I would like an order of fries for the table.”

“tables don’t eat”, the

waiter replies as she shrugs her head; idiot.

“You know what I mean”, Bilta replies to the waiter; *amateur*.

“Hey”, I interject to the waiter, “I would also like a tall mug of hot chocolate, yo.”

“shut up, jamie”, the waiter replies as she rolls her eyes, “you act like you own me. i am not your personal servant.”

I shrug; *why’s everyone so snarky today?*

“Yeah, whatever—*get me a hot chocolate and there will be a big tip, in it, for you.*”

“there’s going to be a big fist in your face, jamie.”

“Why are you so mad at me, random.waiter?”, I reply as I shrug, “what did I ever do to you?”

“You said that my friend was *fat.*”

i pause; i probably said some stupid shit like that, at some point.

“Um...”, I reply as I sigh, “can you be more specific? *I tend to do that, a lot.*”

“Last week—at *the promenade.*”

“oh—the orca with the tuxedo?”

“Exactly, Jamie!”

“Yeah”, I respond as I sigh, “I said *phat*—like she’s hot. I dug her style, yo.”

“oh?”, the waiter respond as she looks down at her feet.

“Yeah, detective annoying”, I reply as I turn my head to Bilta, “try to get the facts straight.”

30 APR "BILTA—I CAN TELL THAT YOU ARE REALLY NERVOUS; IT'S WRITTEN ALL OVER YOUR FACE", I ROLL MY EYES, "BREATHE AND CONFIDENCE, YO."

"I've never eaten a digital.deep-fried twinkie, boss", he replies as he grimaces.

"You'll be fine, Bilta", I continue speaking into my digital.telephone at the cafe by the beach, "you want to try and fit in—*just grab a twinkie and take a bite, yo. Make sure that people see you—you want to be observed. People are judging you—constantly watching to see what you do. Be one of them—grab one and pretend like you are having fun, yo.*"

Bilta sighs.

"I'm not really into that, yo."

"Bilta—*be a man; eat a fucking twinkie.*"

I sigh; I roll my eyes and shrug; *it's like having a conversation with a dumb cat, sometimes.*

"what did you digital.think?", he replies through the telephone, "there was a pause—what are you thinking?"

"I'm just wondering why I pay you to sit at the beach pretending to sell toasters to random passer-byers and you won't even eat one twinkie?"

"twinkie, twinkie, little star", he starts singing.

"Bilta", I reply as I sigh again, "we have no time for games and shit—*the time to play is tomorrow.*"

"boss—I just bought a twinkie."

"Oh—my—God, Bilta", I reply as I shrug, "you actually listened for once—*so did people see you, yo?*"

"Yeah", he continues speaking as he starts speaking quietly to me, "they're staring at me—*I don't want to eat the twinkie, now.*"

"we, just, had this discussion—like, literally, 0.383737 nanoseconds ago, bilta", i continue speaking as i look down at my phone.

I scan the small digital.keypad on my device; I hit the button marked *digital.intercom*. I put the phone up to my mouth; I start speaking.

"everyone—look at bilta. he is eating a twinkie, yo."

The message plays over the large speakers at the small digital.fair; everyone stops talking and walking around; they look around and start staring at him.

I look back at my phone; I hit the *button* marked *off*; the device switches back to digital.personal mode.

“see, bilta”, i start speaking as i sigh, “no one was actually staring at you—you made that all up in your head. but, now they are—welcome to the fair. enjoy your twinkie, bilta.”

“I just took a bite, boss”, he speaks into the digital telephone, “so... it’s kinda, strange.”

He pauses; I hear him chewing.

“it’s pretty tasty—i,

actually, like, somewhat, kinda, enjoy it.”

“Bilta”, I reply as I roll my eyes, “I don’t pay you to have fun—*just make sure that people are watching you eat the twinkie.* This is work—*play time is for another time called not right now.* This should definitely get people coming around by the digital toaster stand and you’re, certain, to get some great eavesdropping feedback on what people think of our new fonts and colors.”

i pause; i take a sip of my coffee; i signal for the waiter to come over.

“Make sure to write down the

things that people are saying—*if, there’s any anomalies or incongruencies that you see.* Yo—we want to really make sure that we are getting 100% real thoughts and opinions, on this matter.”

I take another sip of my coffee.

“i’ll take a hamburger”, i say to the waiter as i put my feet on the small wooden table.

“Bilta”, I continue speaking into my digital telephone, “when it comes to selling toasters—*you leave nothing to chance.*”

30 APR “WOW—THAT WAS A DISASTER!”, I CONTINUE TO BILTA, “I CAN’T BELIEVE THAT I DROPPED ANOTHER HOTDOG ON MY LAP, YO!”

“yeah, boss”, he replies as he shrugs, “you have butter fingers, today.”

“Butter shut the fuck up, Bilta”, I reply as I grab a

digital.serviette from the table in the cafe by the beach, “and, now I have mayonaise all over my pants—*people are going to think things!*”

“it will be alright”, bilta

replies as he reaches over and grabs another napkin.

“It’s ok—I can do this myself”, I continue speaking as I roll

my eyes, “you dare me to eat three hotdogs, at the same time, with my eyes blindfolded and only using my left hand and now look at me!”

“you almost did it”, he responds as he sighs, “you would have been a legend!”

“You would have a fist in your face”, I reply as I shrug, “but, anyways... can we stop the game of truth-or-dare, now? It’s, also, kinda weird for two grown men—*some dude and his velociraptor*—to be doing these things, in public; or, just in general.”

“I like to have fun.”

“we, clearly, have extremely different ideas of a good time, bilta.”

I shrug as I wipe up the mayonnaise from my teflon pants; *it’s just never good when I’m around this guy, yo.*

“Like”, I continue speaking as I pick up another napkin, “you got good research and all—*but, this is what you discovered at the digital.fair?* A fucking hotdog eating contest?”

“yeah, boss”, bilta replies as he shrugs, “they were like—loving

it! i considered entering but i was too shy, yo.”

“It would have been a great opportunity to do more market research, Bilta”, I respond as I shrug, “next time, take a chance—*enter a hotdog eating contest. Fuck it—why not? One life—live it!*”

“I don’t know much about those competitions, boss—I *don’t think that I would do that well.*”

“well—if you never enter the competition, you never win. if, you don’t win, you are a non-winner. what does that make you, yo?”

“A loser?”

“Don’t be so hard on yourself, loser”, I continue speaking as I place the dirty napkin on the small wooden table, “you are just a non-winner. Not everyone wins, like me—*just accept it.* It’s how it goes—*you can always lose.* You can’t always fail. You can’t always smile.”

“what’s that mean?”

“Things change—*winners today are the losers of tomorrow; and, vice-versa.* Just wait—*patience and discernment go far in determining who is ahead in the future.* Rather, then, looking

to be #1 now, right now, let it go—it’s ok to #2 sometimes if it puts you in better position for what’s ahead tomorrow.”

“so i want to go #2?”

“I’m not saying that, Bilta”, I reply as I continue wiping the mess on my pants, “but... don’t consider yourself a failure if you don’t win, or get what you want, today—*you always have tomorrow to also be a loser.*”

“that sounds inspirational and shit, boss”, bilta replies as he hands me a digital. napkin.

“I do the comedy circuit on random Wednesday’s in a shady part of the dark side of the other town where I don’t go, often.”

01 MAY “I HAVE ANGER PROBLEMS SO I WRITE A BLOG WITH FOUR LETTER WORDS, YO”, BILTA REPLIES AS HE SIPPS THE COFFEE BY THE BEACH.

I lean back on the concrete park bench by the shore; I turn my head to catch the surfers waiting in the water for the incoming swell.

“surfing was fun, yo”, i replay to bilta as i take a sip from my styro-foam cup, “it’s not shit.”

“Yeah—I had fun with that, also.”

“I don’t know why you think that I asked your opinion, Bilta.”

i take a sip of my coffee; it’s delicious—i drink too much coffee, probably.

“Anyways, Bilta”, I continue speaking as I turn my head to him, “you were saying that write a blog? What’s it about?”

“Couple dudes talking and

shit.”

“oh wow?”, i reply as i roll my eyes, “sounds interesting if you’re a fucking loser.”

“Hear me out, boss”, he responds as he turns his head to me, “it helps—*it helps me to understand what is going on.* After, I publish a post—I enjoy reading it. Often times, I am able to find my hidden biases and undisclosed opinions—*it’s just Freudian slip and slip; you know?*”

“Oh wow?”, I question him as I take another sip from my coffee, “so do you have to be lame or a loser to do that?”

“it helps.”

“I have five fingers of help that will write a blog for you”, I continue speaking to him as I turn my head back to the ocean, “... but, you’re right about anger problems. You

really think that it helps?”

“yeah—my psychiatrist told me to start writing down my thoughts; like over ten years ago, and i stuck with it.”

“Your stories are so fucking boring, Bilta.”

“Why did you ask me, then?”, he replies as he shrugs, “dumb questions and lame answers go hand-in-hand like coffee and sugar.”

“like coffee and cream, yo.”

“No, boss”, Bilta continues speaking, “the actual idiomatic expression is that coffee and cream go together, not sugar. That would be strange.”

“Why are we still talking, Bilta?”

“you wonder why we are still friends?”

I pause; he sighs; I take a sip of coffee; he sips his soda; I lean back on the park bench.

“This bench isn’t very comfortable.”

“it’s like our friendship, boss”, he replies as he shuffles on it, “it’s not comfortable but here we are, and we’re not leaving.”

“Speak for yourself, Bilta”, I respond as I stand up and stretch my arms, “I’m heading back to my house to grab dinner, yo.”

“You want company?”, Bilta continues speaking as he turns his head to me.

“i’ll be happy to cook you a dinner of flying five fingers, some other time, bilta”, i reply as i sigh, “but, as it is, i’m tired—i got other shit to do.”

“Shit called avoiding me?”, he replies as he turns his head away.

“It had crossed my mind—*once or twice, perhaps*. But, no—*HR is home for dinner tonight so we are having a special meal.*”

i take a sip of coffee.

“Next time, Bilta”, I continue speaking as I look back at the ocean.

01 MAY BESO; AMOR; TAZA; TAKE; BIKE; SEXO; LIKE—I SCRIBBLE ON THE DIGITAL.NAPKIN AT THE CAFE BY THE BEACH—TIME; SIDE; OTRO; LADO; KISS.

“what you doing, boss?”, bilta exclaims as he enters the cafe, “you look busy, yo.”

“Yeah—I’m trying this blogging idea like you were talking about,

Bilta.”

“we all give in, eventually.”

“Shut the fuck up”, I reply as

I roll my eyes, “I’m starting by writing all the four letter words that I can think of to describe me—*or, what I want to talk about*. You want to see my digital.list?”

“Like”, he replies as he shrugs

and puts his hand in the air, “not particularly—but, that sounds great, I guess.”

“so anyways”, i continue speaking as i slide the napkin across the table to him, “what do these look like? they good?”

“Cock!”

“Um...”, I reply as I pull the napkin back, “excuse me, Bilta?”

“there’s a fucking chicken in the cafe”, he replies as he points to the small bird.

The chicken scurries under our table; I bend over and look under it.

“Bilta”, I continue speaking as I put my arms out to the side, “don’t make any sudden movements—I’m going to scare it and I want you to grab it when it goes your way.”

“can i just pretend that i am helping and not do anything?”

“We have no time for shenanigans, Bilta”, I reply as I roll my eyes, “put your arms out to pretend that you are bigger than you really are—move that

chair over there closer to block the exit. I am going to yell and then you grab it.”

“Your plan sounds like shit, boss.”

“they normally do”, i reply as i take a breath.

“Potato!”

the chicken doesn’t move.

“I don’t know, Bilta”, I continue speaking as I awkwardly look at the small rooster hiding in the corner under our table, “he looks kinda happy—maybe, *it’s ok?*”

“A loose cock is never ok”, Bilta replies as he sighs.

“i’m not sure what you just said?”, i reply as i shrug, “but, maybe, we should just leave it alone—like, not do anything?”

“I don’t care, boss.”

“Why don’t you care, Bilta?”

“like”, he replies as he shrugs, “who cares, yo?”

“Me.”

“Not my problem”, Bilta replies as he shrugs and reaches over for my napkin.

he grabs it and starts scanning the list; he shakes his head; puts it back on the table; pushes it back towards me.

“It’s pretty good”, he replies as he shrugs, “if you’re a fucking amateur, yo.”

I shrug.

“yeah, whatever, señor celoso.”

“So anyways, boss”, Bilta continues speaking as the waiter comes over to the table, “I got notice that we have settled on the new apartment at the beach—I’m going to be moving. It means that I won’t be able to help out, that much, with your mysteries, anymore.”

“Shit.”

“huh?”

“That’s a good one”, I continue speaking as I scribble the word on the napkin, “oh... yeah, ok? I will miss you or something—when do you leave, Bilta?”

“Yesterday?”

“figure of speech?”

“Not quite.”

“Huh?”

**the digital.hologram
shuts off; the com-
puterized.image of
bilta dissapears; i
blink.**

“What?”, I continue speak-
ing as I sigh, “so he was just
pretending to be here—*the
whole time?*”

**01 MAY UPDATE ON THE DIGITAL.HOME.FRONT: BILTA IS
INVESTING IN BITCOIN; HR MADE \$12, LAST WEEK; THAT
DUDE IS NOT HERE, OR THERE; SHE IS VERY
OVERWORKED AND UNDER-APPRECIATED, YO**

“What you writing, boss?”,
Bilta asks as he sits down
in the plastic recliner in the
cafe by beach.

**“ask your girlfriend”, i
reply as i roll my eyes,
“but... no really—i just,
occasionally, write
home to tell them i’m
not dead.”**

“Oh—*wow?*”, he responds as
he shrugs, “that sounds neat,
I guess—or, *something?*”

“Yeah—*ok?*”, I continue
speaking as I shrug, “it
passes the time—*the
alternative of making Sudoku
puzzles didn’t pay the bills,
yo.*”

“can i read it?”

“Can you shut the fuck up,
Bilta?”

“So anyways”, he replies as he
signals for the waiter to come
over, “you’re probably
wondering why I am here?”

“It actually had never crossed
my mind”, I continue speak-
ing as I type on the small
digital.keyboard, “like...
literally, not even once. Not
even a passing thought—*like,
absolutely no interest or
curiosity, in knowing.*”

**“well, then, let me
explain.”**

“Go on—can’t stop a tractor trailer of horse manure going down hill, yo.”

“what’s that mean, boss?”

“I don’t know—it’s just a saying.”

I hit *send* on the keypad; the machine *beeps*.

No Internet

i sigh: if it wasn’t for good luck, i would be fishing in the digital bahamas.

“So, anyways, Bilta”, I continue speaking as I turn my head to him, “you had something, vaguely, interesting to say 0.3643993 nanoseconds, ago. Something about why you were visiting me, today, in the cafe?”

he turns his head from the waiter to me.

“I bought a new digital.lamp.shade!”

“ok?”, i reply as i shrug, “what’s your point, yo?”

“It makes shadows of digital dinosaurs on the wall in my living room—I thought that *HR*

would like it, as a gift.”

“No”, I continue speaking as I turn my head back to the digital.computer, “we’re fine—thanks for your consideration, Bilta.”

he looks down at his feet; starts to pout.

“You’re such a fucking cry-baby, yo”, I explain as I sigh, “yeah—*ok*. Thanks for the digital.gift—I am sure that it will be used quite often. *HR* does love dinosaurs—especially *T-Rex*. She is certain to love it.”

bilta reaches down; opens his backpack and grabs the small blue package.

“Congratulations!”, he exclaims as he hands it to me across the table, “I heard your news, yo!”

i shake my head; that i made digital.pancakes this morning?

“Huh?”

“That you’re expecting your second child!”

“yeah”, i reply as i shrug, “not really sure

what you are talking about—got to be honest on this one, like, you sure that you’re talking to the right person, yo?”

“Yeah”, Bilta continues speaking as he leans back in his recliner, “I got the invite to the baby shower in the mail.”

He reaches back down and pulls a small piece of paper out of his digital.bookbag.

he hands me the small flyer; i look at it.

“Yeah—*ok?*”, I continue speaking as I point to the address, “this is actually not addressed to you—and, *that’s not my address, there.*”

“you mean that this isn’t from you, yo?”

“No, Bilta”, I reply as I roll my eyes, “this is just junk mail.”

01 MAY “WE SHOULD HAVE A BIG MUSIC FESTIVAL IN DIGITAL.TEXARKANA”, I REPLY TO BILTA, “IT’S THE MOST BORING SPOT THERE; YO—NOTHING EVER HAPPENS!”

“people never name their kids thursday or friday?”, bilta replies as he sighs, **“i wonder why that is?”**

“Why do you keep thinking that your opinion matters, Bilta?” I continue speaking as I reread the digital.message on my digital.telephone, “he says that he wants to do something fun—*maybe we can have DJs and shit?*”

“the deep.fried.twinkie was pretty tasty”, bilta replies as he shrugs, **“i could go for another one of those—i wonder what else you could deep fry?”**

“We probably want a moon bounce?” I think outloud as I shrug, “maybe a couple clowns or, some, shit?”

“i hate clowns!”, bilta

exclaims as he sips his coffee in the cafe by the beach.

“Me too!”

“They are so creepy”, he continues speaking as he looks out the window, “with their little eyes, and furry tails—*hiding nuts for the winter.*”

i pause: it never ends, yo.

“So, Bilta”, I reply as I shrug, “that’s actually a squirrel that you just described—*we actually like those.* Not sure where your misplaced animosity to small rodents comes from but let’s stay on topic—*right?* And, also, we’re going to pass on the clowns and, there will probably, be a deep.fried.twinkie stand.”

“How many people do we need to entertain in this music festival, yo?”

“i don’t know?”, i reply as i shrug, **“i never thought to check the population—what do you think that it is—like 7 or 8 people?”**

“I don’t know”, Bilta responds as he leans back in his plastic recliner, “I can go check the Earth logs later to get a better idea of the density of the population. I, believe, that it is pretty scarce.”

“I was there once”, I continue speaking as I sip my coffee, “back when I was on Earth—before my Dorinto days. It was nice—*but, if you blinked, and were going over 40 kmh, you would miss 92% of the town.*”

“it’s that small, yo?”

“Like my interest in your opinion, Bilta”, I reply as I shrug, “but, all the same, I feel like you are going to give it to me, anyways. All I can

do is pretend to fake like I care—*zone out for a moment while you talk, then reappear to say something interesting; a retort, at the right time, moves attitudes.*”

“huh?”

“Like our music festival that we are setting up”, I continue speaking as I roll my eyes, “it’s small but impactful—*like your words, yo.*”

“Oh?”, he replies as he sighs, “so... I was thinking—*you come up with any other four letter words to write about on your*

blog?”

“yes, bilta—i did.”

I bend over and grab a piece of digital.paper from my bookbag.

i start reading the text on the digital.screen.

Shut: damn: ruin: kill: sigh: bomb: done: over: gone.

“Yeah”, he replies as he shuffles in his chair, “those

are pretty good, if you’re a weirdo, yo.”

i pause and grimace; he rolls his eyes.

“I only have one word that I use on my blog”, Bilta continues speaking as he leans forward and grabs a hot pretzel off the small wooden table, “you want to hear it?”

“not particularly.”

“Sexy.”

01 MAY WILD GOAT: THE UNTOLD STORY OF WHAT ME AND YOUR GIRLFRIEND DID LAST NIGHT, AND, SOME OTHER LIES, I’LL SAY, IF YOU DON’T START READING MY BLOG, YO

i roll my eyes: sigh: shrug.

“That’s for real”, I continue speaking to Bilta as I take a sip of coffee, “the name of your blog, yo?”

“it’s a .time digital.web-site because i always post when it’s appropriate.”

“That makes no sense—*consider making it a .boring*

because that’s what it is.”

“you chuckled”, he replies as closes the digital.lid on the digital.laptop, “that’s

what matters—really.”

“So, anyways, Bilta”, I reply as I sigh, “why are you showing me this again—*like, is there some point to this?*”

“Yeah! I have a 340px X 340px open space on my website that is perfect to advertise the music festival, yo.”

i roll my eyes.

“Bilta”, I respond as I shrug, “there’s only eight people in digital.Texas—*you only have to pick up a phone.* It will, literally, only take, like, something, like fifteen minutes to canvas the whole town. Why would we want to advertise on your digital website?”

“It’s free.”

i pause: his point is well thought out and incredibly valid—it’s also at the right time, like he mentioned with his domain name.

“Ok—*Bilta*”, I reply as I lean back in my plastic recliner in the cafe by the beach, “I’m listening—*probably going to regret this decision.* All the same, give it to me, Bilta.”

“Please, don’t say that again, boss”, he replies as he rolls his eyes, “but... still, I think

that we can attract a couple more people to our digital music festival there. I mean—*there’s going to be a fucking moon bounce.* You need more than seven people on a moon bounce before it gets anywhere near being entertaining—*basic logic.* If we can get three more people, accounting for a standard deviation of 0.685 and a 95% confidence level, we can have a, somewhat, not awful, experience.”

i pause; i sip my coffee.

“Bilta—*you’re a genius.* Very weird—*let’s not forget that.* But, still, I think that you may have a point—*so you’re thinking that me advertising on your already vacant spot on your digital website can attract the remaining three or four people that we need to enjoy the moon bounce.* As it is properly intended, yo.”

“S”, Bilta exclaims as his eyes light up, “I did some basic research on the surrounding areas—*there’s another town, nearby, that his four people living there.* If we can get half of them, the town, to show up—*then we may have a critical mass to achieve lift off of our moon bounce!*”

i cough, a little.

“You’re so lame, Bilta”, I reply as I shrug, “when people hear that we have a moon bounce, you will have a solid 82% of the population in attendance in our event—*consider the numbers.* Numbers don’t

lie—*unlike the chicken that is still under our table asleep.*”

“does it lay or lie, yo?”

“Let’s stop talking about chickens, Bilta”, I reply as I shrug, “your moon bounce advertisement idea... *it’s top notch.*”

“That’s all I do!”

“why are you so lame, bilta?”

“You know”, he replies as he shrugs, “we think that this is part of why we, velociraptors, went extinct in the Crustacean period.”

“is that for real? i don’t recall that in your instruction manual.”

“Yeah”, he continues as he rolls his eyes, “I just made that up.”

02 MAY “YOU TREAT ME LIKE A \$2 LOTTERY TICKET, YO”, I CONTINUE SPEAKING AS I ROLL MY EYES, “SCRATCH TO SEE IF IT’S A WINNER AND HOW MUCH YOU GET.”

“boss—it’s only six people, yo!”

“Bilta—that is not the point. The capacity on the moon bounce is twelve people. We have too many people at our music festival, now! We have a wait list for the moon bounce—it’s a fucking disaster!”

“I don’t think that it’s a bad thing”, he replies as he taps his claw on the digital.turntable, “we can sell concessions—corndogs and popcorn.”

bilta takes a gulp of his coffee.

“It’s just all business to you, Bilta—people have to wait now to get on the moon bounce. We had to hire a bouncer to control the line—this is not the digital.music.festival that I wanted, yo.”

A tear falls from my eye onto the ground; I turn my head away from Bilta into the setting sun: I sigh; *why can’t*

it just be easy, for once, and why can’t I just have a normal adventure, yo?

i turn my head back to bilta.

“It will be ok, Bilta”, I continue speaking as I sigh, “I will carry on—we will continue the party, even with the line of three people waiting to get on the moon bounce.”

i take a sip of my soda.

“Boss”, he replies as he shrugs, “are you mentally ill? *It’s like, literally, just a moon bounce.* I’m not really even sure why an adult would be on it, or, have any interest, what-so-ever, in going on a moon bounce at our digital.music.festival in digital.Texarkana—*have you considered how weird this is, yo?*”

“Check yourself, Bilta”, I reply as I roll my eyes, “*it’s my fucking party—it’s my fucking moon bounce.* I will tell you

when it’s ok to have a waiting line to get on the moon bounce—*Bilta, I’m upset.* Is the deep.fried.twinkie stand setup yet, yo?”

“um...”, he replies as he shrugs, “yeah... i think so, weirdo. like... is it really that important?”

“Bilta”, I reply as I push him out of the way and take a step towards the twinkie cart, “don’t *ever* get between a man and his deep.fried.twinkie—it will end badly for you, yo.”

“I think that this is your anger problem coming out again, boss?”, Bilta replies as he brushes his jacket off.

“don’t even, bilta”, i exclaim as i storm towards the deep.fried. twinkies.

Bilta reaches into his pocket; pulls out his digital.telephone;

scans the keypad and hits *intercom*.

“Excuse me, everyone!”

he starts speaking over the digital.pa.system at the music festival.

“There’s been a change of plans and the moon bounce will be closing in fifteen minutes.”

he sighs; why’s that dude, always, make everything so difficult?

“Make sure to pick up your t-shirt before you leave—*thanks for attending our digital.music.festival in digital.Texarkana*. Hope you enjoyed your visit!”

Moments later, I return to the DJ table.

“bilta—i may have over-reacted, a bit.”

“You never know when or where—*but, that’s one thing for certain, boss!* It’s not like it’s the first time—I know you, pretty, well.”

“Bilta—next time, don’t invite five additional people to our digital.music.festival—I *understand that you want a sweet break dance circle on the floor as you spin the vinyl; but, we ended up getting a line to the moon bounce and we can’t have that again, yo.*”

“you have to admit that it was fun—for a moment, there. watching the velociraptor congo line parading around the festival?”

“Bilta”, I reply as I let out a long sigh, “when it comes to velociraptor congo lines at digital.music.festivals—*there’s never a wrong time for that*. Just, next time, don’t fuck up my moon bounce.”

02 MAY “DON’T MAKE YOUR WIFE, YOUR DIGITAL WALLPAPER ON YOUR DIGITAL.TELEPHONE, BILTA”, I SHRUG, “YOU’RE SUCH A PEDESTRIAN; A WANKER, YO.”

He shrugs.

“she’s hot?”

“I don’t disagree with the basic premise of your arguement for that action—*but, all the same—do like a professional*: pick some random hot chick that you barely know and never talk to and put her picture on your phone as the digital. telephone.”

“does it help, yo?”

“I’m not sure what it would help with”, I reply as I roll my eyes, “but... it should get you thinking about someone else.”

“not my wife?”

“Oh God no, Bilta!”, I shrug, “*you.*”

“don’t think about me?”

“Oh-my-God, please, no!”, I continue as I fold the last corner of the moon bounce, “it’s like the moon bounce fiasco—*you get an idea, a story, in your head and it never changes.*”

i pause: i wipe the sweat from my brow.

“You always think that inviting more velociraptors to the party makes it more fun—*you don’t*

consider the additional work to take care of your friends and, that, maybe we can’t entertain that many velociraptors. Bilta: four words—*moon bounce wait list.* You know, yo?”

“Next time that you want to just willy-nilly get some of your friends to crash my party, or adventure, I’m just going to say those four magic words.”

“you’re so weird, boss.”

“What do you think I pay you for?”

“I get paid for this—*I thought that it was just a fun adventure with some dude and his velociraptor pal.*”

“you stretch the standard definition of friendship to some absurd place when it doesn’t belong.”

“What’s that mean?”

“I’m boss—you’re employee.”

“do i have an employee number—i noticed that there’s a place on my badge for an employee number.”

“Bilta”, I reply as I pick up the

deflated moon bounce, “you are #1 in my book—*#1, yo.*”

“What’s that mean?”, Bilta replies as scratches his head with his claw, “it sounded kinda creepy the way that you said that—*is there some alternate meaning that I’m not getting?*”

i sigh.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about, Bilta”, I reply as I stare at him, “I, literally, have no idea what you are talking about.”

I slowly start tapping my fingers on the moon bounce cardboard box: *he is sharp as a dull potato, sometimes.*

“so anyways, bilta”, i continue speaking as i sigh, “you helping or am i paying you to watch me work?”

“How can I help, boss?”

“Get me a deep.fried.twinkie”, I reply as I snap my finger.

oh man—i feel super professional and shit.

I smile; I pick up the moon bounce and slide it into the cardboard box; I fold the box up; pick up a digital.sharpie; start writing on teh side of the

package:

Broken—*don't inflate.*

**“that should be good”,
i speak to bilta as he
hands me the deep.**

fried.twinkie.

“This was the last one”, Bilta
replies as he takes a sip of his
soda.

**“yeah”, i respond as i
sigh, “figuratively and**

**literally—got to watch
my weight. so the band
still here? or, they pack
up already?”**

“Yeah”, he replies as he puts
his twinkie in his mouth, “they
left town a long time ago—*it's a
shame; was some good music.*”

02 MAY “IT’S NOT ME—I’M NOT THE ONE WHO TOOK YOUR HOTDOG WHEN YOU WENT TO THE BATHROOM, BILTA, YO. AND, THEN, SECRETLY, ATE IT, RIGHT, QUICKLY.”

**“boss”, bilta replies as
he sighs, “yo—you have
mayonaise on your
lips.”**

“Sunscreen, Bilta—*that's
sunscreen.* You see what you
want to see—*your opinion, only,
reveals your hidden biases.*”

**“you also have digital.
mustard on your shirt
and there's ketchup on
your teflon pants!”**

“We all live an illusion called
reality, Bilta”, I remark as I
shuffle in my plastic recliner
in the cafe by the beach, “let's
not count the monkeys before
they use the typewriter... we
have another mission.”

“And”, Bilta continues speak-
ing as he sighs, “there's a little
piece of hotdog in the seat
next to you—*I may be a velo-
ciraaptor but you're a fucking
savage, yo!*”

i sigh.

“Bilta—*do you want this job?*
We have actual real work, not
called slacking, to do—*your D'f
skills were the up-most at the
digital.music.festival, now, we
need you to learn how to make
an apple tart.*”

“What the fuck is that?”

**“bilta—if you're going
to keep working for me,
you need to tart now.”**

“See”, he replies as he sips

his coffee, “this is why no one laughs at your jokes.”

“Your girlfriend did yesterday”, I reply as I roll my eyes, “so... are you in? Are you ready to start tarting on Planet IDMFNC?”

“tarts aren’t going to make themselves!”

“It’s pretty, clearly, obvious, that you are just here for the money”, I continue speaking as I pick up my coffee, “so... just call me if you have any questions, I’ll have my phone on digital.silent but it will vibrate if you need me.”

I pause; I sip my coffee, again.

“like your girlfriend.”

“Shut the fuck up, boss”, Bilta replies as he leans back in his recliner, “so... when do I go?”

“tart now”, i reply as i turn my head to look out the window.

I sip my coffee.

“So Bilta”, I continue speaking as I turn my head back to him, “I’m going to have to be honest, on this one, so... like, I’m not actually sure what the fuck a tart is?”

I pause; I sip my coffee.

“you ever heard of one?”

“Yeah—*it’s a type of pastry.* Really excellent with an espresso. Do you ever get out of the house, boss?”

“I did last night, for a secret mission. Do you want to know who I was visiting?”

“are you going to make that dumb joke again, boss, yo?”

“So anyways”, I continue speaking as I reach into my bookbag and pull out the small pamphlet, “I heard that you are getting into gardening, agriculture, plants, corn, other four letter words—*so I bought you a book to help out.*”

i hand it to bilta.

How to Be, Slightly, Less of A Loser And Not Annoy Your Friends 84% of The Times That You Want To Talk: a short manual on your girlfriend and, some, other, some-what random things we say when you leave

bilta grabs it; starts looking at the cover.

“Is this a real book? Like—*for real, this is the cover. Like—someone actually made this book? Wrote it and shit?*”

“ask her.”

“Who?”

“That, Bilta—*is a pretty good mystery to solve.*”

“you’re not going to tell me who?”

“Only owls, Bilta, tell *who.*”

02 MAY SOMEWHERE BETWEEN LOST AND FOUND: ONE MAN'S JOURNEY INTO THE WILDS OF WYOMING AND, SHORT STORIES, ABOUT WRESTLING BEARS AND AXES

"Yeah", I reply to Bilta as I look at the digital.book cover, "it's about *Affirmative Action and digital.Sub-Prime.Mortgages*, yo."

"that's interesting", he continues speaking as he looks at the cover of the book in his hand.

Why Eating Play-Doh on The Playground as A Child is The Only Good Thing That You've Done in Your Life, yo: a short story

"what's it about?", he responds as he turns his head to me in the cafe by beach, "never heard of this one."

"Not sure? *It was on the digital.clearance.rack at the local.bookstore*. I picked it up; looked interesting; thought

that it would be good for our book.exchange."

"I spilled coffee on my pants, last week."

"what?", i reply to bilta as i shrug, "what's your point?"

"Knowing that, small, bit of information is about as useful as getting a book that you know nothing about, yo."

"I like the picture on the cover."

bilta turns his head back down to the book; he squints.

"Is that what I think it is?", he replies as he turns his head to me, "that's me?"

"Yup—I was holding on to your

assignment.writings and submitted them to my publisher. This book is your work—you're not, exactly, a celebrity. Bilta—but, now you are a published writer."

i pull a digital.sharpie out of my backpack; hand it to him.

"So", I continue speaking as he grabs the marker, "are you going to sign it, yo?"

"autographs are for amateurs", he replies as he shrugs, "so... like anyways. i get royalties from the sale of this book or what?"

"What?", I exclaim as I jump back, "how'd did you know about those?"

"I'm a velociraptor—not a fuck-

ing idiot.”

he starts tapping his claw on the small wooden table; i take a gulp; now—the negotiations start.

“So”, I continue speaking as I lean back in my plastic recliner, “how’d the tart mission go?”

“Tart now, we aren’t talking about that, boss”, he replies as he leans back, “but... for the record, it was nice—*I made a couple delicious pastries; cooked; baked; there was flour, eggs and manzana, yo.*”

“that sounds interest-

ing”, i say as i sigh, “i had a great time cashing the paychecks from your work on the mission—thanks for being a team.player, bilta.”

“I think that you have to look out for each other”, he replies as he pulls a cigarette out of the pack on the table, “trust me—I’m, *always, looking out for you, boss.*”

“Ok?”, I reply as I pull a cigarette out also, “so like... you ready for your next mystery? This time, you are going to Planet QLQLQL2.”

“i was just there, last

week”, he explains as he sighs, “it’s such a pain-in-the-ass dealing with the re.entry into the digital.atmosphere. can you send someone else on this mission, yo?”

“We only have you, Bilta—*you’re both a velociraptor and a valuable member of the team.*”

“That’s what I’m afraid of, yo.”

“what’s that?”

“With Dontu gone—*you don’t have anymore velociraptors.*”

