

extracted from THE CHAOS! QUINCUNX

>> GARRY THOMAS MORSE

RUN, DON'T WALK!

Alice (Squeaky) Fomme commandeered the cash with a warm grin.

"Yes, what would you like?"

"I want to return these..."

The woman was trembling. She pushed forward two black thermoi.

Alice scrutinized the return slip.

"But the receipt is for the new ones. These are our old product line."

"Don't argue with me! I've never heard of such a thing! I want to speak to the manager."

A bearded head emerged from behind the counter.

"Can I help?"

"I have receipts, just not for these. I want to trade them in for store credit."

"Alright."

"But this one, she's arguing with me. Never argue with the customer!"

The woman left with a smug expression and a gigantic cookie.

"Alice..."

"They steal the stuff. The old manager was wise. They're like a team or something."

"Who would steal a thermos to get food?"

"It's easy. Then they root around or shake people down for receipts."

"Well thank you, the all new Nancy Drew."

"I can't believe you let her get away with it."

"Alice, let me tell you a story. I used to believe in fair play and freedom of expression and all that jazz. That was until I saw *The Secret Corporation*. It was a film that showed me how we are not responsible as individuals for our actions. *The Secret Corporation* is. So it is not me deciding to fire you immediately. It is in fact *The Secret Corporation*. And it would do you a world of wonder to watch this film. And run, don't walk! It really changed my life."

Alice stared at him incredulously. Then she untied her *Filterz* designer apron and slowly wrapped it around the manager's neck. She pulled and pulled at his windpipe with strength she had never used before. Then Alice ran.

The new store manager arrived within minutes, and swept his predecessor into the corner out of sight. After all, it wasn't his doing. It could only be the omnipotent will of *The Secret Corporation*.

HELP WANTED

Jin and Jim rhombaed into the *Mirage Club*, hand in hand.

“Hi. We were wondering if you had any positions free?”

An identical although infinitely wearier face looked up, catching the shadows cast by a reservation lamp. She appeared incapable of surprise.

“Sure. One of our girls left her post today. She was a total mutant anyway. So we do have room for two more. We always have room for two more...”

“Cool.”

“Please fill out this application form and I will forward it to our *Überseer* system.”

She blinked twice.

“Okay, *Überseer* grants you permission to join our local family under business license #RDXPHUM-37805. Would you please step into the back for a quick ident scan?”

Jin and Jim hopped into the scanning chamber, hand in hand.

“Now we just want to check your genetic composition and history, just to be thorough...”

A team of Jins and Jims stripped Jin and Jim down to their netherwear and strapped them into the *Mirage Club iDent 7000*.

“Now hold still. We just need a sample of your short hairs to analyze.”

One of the Jins ran the swiper over Jim and one of the Jims ran the swiper over Jin.

Everyone in the chamber was pulsing with a primordial magnetism that spliced them to the core.

“Okay, looks like you are both qualified to work at the *Mirage Club*. Congrats!”

“I can’t believe you checked her out.”

“I can’t believe you checked him out.”

But Jin and Jim were well beyond getting any ideas. The combination of the establishment’s PSI field and their own compartmentalized DNA was mixing faster than a *Mirage Club Zucchini Mantini*, on special every Saturday. They were already being pulled toward the singular will of the leisurely dining continuum, the host cell from which there was no escape. The attendant Jins worked steadily to perform the magic act of minor surgery on Jim that would put his personal organism in continual contact with head office. The attendant Jims did likewise for Jin. Just a shallow hole in the back and pop pop pop! The pair rose and permitted their demi-brothers and demi-sisters to dress them in outfits three sizes too small. They rippled forward for inspection, displaying a crispy attitude and an eagerness to find everything they heard absolutely hilarious.

“Your first shift starts today, from four to four. And then tomorrow. And then tomorrow...”

WHO IS SALLY GOOD?

Dagny Nabbit leaned sinuously upon the gusher control panel and glared with ruffled placitude at the whirring instruments and titillating dials. Something was wrong. The water usually didn't register objects this large. She undid a single button on her chestnut blazer and breathed a sigh of relief. She was small built but tall and lovely. And her stature and poise simply filled you with oodles of confidence. You only had to look at her. She unstrapped her spiralling *Fashionistas* and rubbed her sore but strong legs and calves with healthy vigour. She placed her palms on the panel and let the vibrations pass through her body. Ever since she had been a little girl, she had loved the sound of running water, and especially the rush of the dam being released. She trembled, hearkening the steady powerful surge of water. It was like a ginormous orgasm, but a ginormous orgasm built by men when men were men. She pulled out a picture of her father three times in five minutes, each time fighting back a fat tear. She thought of his big powerful hands pouring the cement and pounding it into shape and sealing each flaw with his manly sweat. And then he would ride his stubborn but sensitive blue ox to the quarry and break the marble finish with his fists before charmingly assemble an army of talking beavers to adorn the unparalleled inferstructure, the firm and even frightening erection he had brought to life with his own potent yet understanding fingers. She was not finished her reverie when Dagwood Nabbit seized her waist from behind with his furry knuckles. She had not noticed him loping into the room. She tried to hide the picture of their father but he saw what she was doing and sneered viciously.

"You...and that picture!"

Dagny drew back her uncorruptable chin and took her time loading a withering look, before firing it deeply into him. And as he winced, she considered how different he was from Dag Nabbit, similar in name only. Dagwood could guess what she was thinking. She was just like their greedy old man, always getting oiled up to make a killing. Big business interests. Not even a hand on the ass of the little guy. And now she wanted to charge those washups in the former Kanadas for using their own water. Poor suckers. Hadn't Dag Nabbit taken enough of a piddle in the favourite mug of everybody? Why, landsakes, it was time to do some good in the world! Dagny broke free of his animalistic grasp and pouted at him and folded her arms over her business brassiere, knowing what he was thinking. Ever since he and everyone else had watched that propaganda film *The Secret Corporation*, everything had gone whistling up the wazoo.

"There's something strange in the water."

"So?"

"So?"

"What are we supposed to do? Everyone in...*The Secret Corporation*...owns us anyway. If this is what they want, then this is what they want. Who are we to judge?"

"Dagwood, we're the majority shareholders."

"I need a banana. Wann'a banana?"

“No.”

“They help me relax.”

A few months ago, Dagwood Nabbit had struck a deal with the former Kanadas to exchange tons of lumber for banana crops. He was already working on a similar deal involving vast amounts of water. And very soon everyone would get a packet of self-terminating beans and a cup of water...on the house! And now he was up to his scraggly eyebrows with spare limucks full of bananas. But he narrowed his beady eyes together at Dagny, who was still basking in her power suit sexiness. She didn't care about his banana plans one whit. Dagwood stared at her hard. Dagny Nabbit. His sister. Not that he had ever believed it. He would have taught her a lesson with his personal Dagwood long ago...except something held him back. Maybe when the *Social Organization for Greater Good and Yumminess* (otherwise known as S.O.G.G.Y.) got into power...yeah, then he'd show her a thing or too about raging dams.

Dagny stared back at Dagwood, irritated but also soft and understanding, with her lips sampling his hard stare. It was strange they were siblings. She wanted a man, and here was this spineless hairy thing moving about on his knuckles. She wanted a man who was clean shaven and smelled of commercials for muskuline and various other products. But Dagwood usually smelled of cigars and a hundred proof. And presently, her brother was a banana mouth. And he certainly wasn't her secret fantasy or anything. And both of them snorted at the thought floating across the rather humid room.

“We better check it out.”

Dagwood Nabbit shrugged the shoulders of a modern primate.

“Who is Sally Good?”

THE MAGIC SLEEP OF MAGICICADA

“And those are the top twenty ways to Perish in a Public Place, here on the PPP. Join us next week as we continue the countdown...tick tick tick kerploooooie!!!”

Ester Krick held her pillow over her head. Why did she watch? The reports only made her queasy...at first, and then her heart would begin to beat faster and faster. She could imagine the list of desperate criminals disguised as ordinary people all waiting outside the front door, just for her! Women who drowned their infants and patriarchs who served up razor blades in the family cereal. And the list had gotten larger, full of recent cases of devout extremists. She could understand their devotion to the faith. She was a sometimes practicing Stratford-upon-Avonist. But why did believing in a higher power have to cause so much terror and death? She could picture their blank fanatical faces looming out of the shrubbery around her condome. She had bought three security systems in the past few months and had put bars on the windows. But nothing seemed to ease her mind.

“Coming up, strangers on a train. We’ll tell you who not to trust during this reign of terror.”

“Yipe!”

“Also, they found love at the age of being past it. So why did it lead to this gruesome spinesnapping outcome?”

“Eeeeeee!!!”

“In New Haudenosaunee, adoption is widespread. But do you know who your adoptee really is? We’ll meet a family who didn’t have a clue...and <gulp> paid the price for it.”

“Aaaaaahhhh!!!”

“All this and more when *Electroshock Talk* returns...”

Ester held her chest. Her mouth was dry. She was sweating and her heart was palpitating. But her eyes remained glued to the giant screen.

“Do you find getting through the day stressful? And at night, how can you sleep when the world is going to hell? With *Magicicada*.”

The screen showed a woman tossing and turning. The other people in the bed, including a dog, departed in digust. Her eyes were big as saucers and she was shaking.

“Just take two or three of these before you grab some shuteye.”

A glowing neon insect fell from somewhere, presumably the ceiling, and began to jump all over the bed, leaving a trail of floating Zs behind it. At last, it came to rest upon her forehead, broadcasting visible waves directly into her frontal lobe. She closed her eyes and started to smile. Her friends and family slowly began to file back into the room and lay down around her sleeping figure. The dog began to lick her face, completely uninterested in the singing drug-induced cicada.

“Oh that would be so nice.”

Ester took down the 555-MAGICIC number and ran to the creditran in the corridor.

“Warning: *Magicicada* should only be taken in a controlled setting. More than recommended dosage may result in abrupt flights of fancy. *Magicicada* may cause memory loss, headaches, nausea, internal bleeding, memory loss, stroke, infertility, excessive

fertility, loss of appetite, loss of worldly possessions, aneurysms, molting or memory loss. Please consult hotline or media expert before taking *Magiccada*. The small percentage of locust brood in *Magiccada* may affect allergies.”

Ester returned to the living room, very happy that a cartonload was on its way.

“Because isn’t it time you had a good night?”

WHEREFORE ART THOU?

Black Elk Montague sat on the sofa and patted his belly. His glowing newlywed (the former Miss Lorna Capulet) came out to him and scraped the last of the basmati rice out onto his plate.

“Lovely as ever, my dearest! Too kind, too kind!”

“Shut your face, cute cheeks.”

She joined him on the sofa and their hands interlocked. The buzz of matrimonial festiveness was just beginning to wear off but the stage of inexorable malaise had not yet reached its apex. They both stared at the screen, at one with the droning announcer and call-in opinionaters.

“An’ I gist don’t know how we can forget what this man had done.”

“Cast not the first pig’s heart...”

“And this above all...to thine own self be true...”

“Blog Anderson here. Some thoughts about one of the front-runners in the primaries. As for Governor Gewürtztraminer...some would say his checkered past will count against him. But others are optimistic he will win and bring a slickery image as the nation’s new chief.”

Black Elk looked over, with heavy eyelids, at a pile of letters.

“By Jove, I’m stuffed. Anything for me in the post.”

“Just bills, bills. Oh, there’s a letter from my folks.”

“Well? You gonna open it?”

“I don’t know. For some reason, they sure don’t think much of you.”

“That’s natural. They’re Stratford-Avonists. And you knew I was a Marloweian when you said I sure as hell do. But do not fret my dear. They’ll come round.”

“Ya think? You don’t know my parents.”

But Black Elk began to sing a lengthy number.

“Buhwhadathyknow...we gotz our love to keep us snuggly at night...”

“I’ll open it if you stop singing.”

“Whatever the odds...our hugs’ll smush ‘em to bits...”

“Governor, what do you think is our biggest problem today?”

Lorna pried open the letter and their new house exploded.

HE SAID IT WAS YOUR IDEA

Officer Rebecca Tomahawk clicked her boots together and motioned for Slim Gibblets to come in with some vials and nanoscopic equipment.

“Now, Mr. Gibblets found some traces of ultraviolet exposure on your skin and on your clothes, the type that comes from tanning lamps. We are almost certain you are in the tanning business.”

Wilma Pettifogger was shown a simulated re-enactment of her epidermis being rapidly heated and then crisping into a baconish shape.

“Yeah, that ain’t news to me, sugar. You know we used to run *Bronzey’s*, and still do for some extra special customers.”

“But Mr. Gibblets also says the traces are totally retro—the real deal.”

“Huh?”

“The lamps were switched on, only not in this happening era.”

“That was a long time ago. It’s an old family business.”

“That’s what I thought. But then I remembered the raging black market trade in frozen folk, and given Detective Green’s mistrust of you, I checked a few things out. You’ve been running a tidy little cryobed operation and you’ve let a bunch of unregistered illegals into this time. Then we did a chronoscan on this man you were looking to hook up with.”

A screen materialized, revealing the image of Oober Mann.

“This man is from another time. Maybe from a time before *The Meltdown*.”

“I don’t know what you’re yammering about.”

“Your buddy in the cell next door, Shyster Deacon, he already told me everything. He said it was your idea.”

“That bastard! He’s a liar. It was his idea. I wanted to stay in the tanning trade. But he kept saying why just tan their hides when we can freeze ‘em for later...we took their money and put them on ice.”

The instant scenario re-enactor system revealed a diabolical Shyster Deacon, looking around furtively before dumping a body into a tanning bed.

“But why?”

“You’ll have to talk to Shyster about that part.”

Rebecca Tomahawk slapped down a pair of *strayteX* gloves in front of Wilma Pettifogger.

“You know, it’s quite the business, moving people through time. And now it looks like time has finally caught up with you.”

The Librarian opened the door to see the determined kisser of none other than Oober Mann. She began to glow through her flesh in spite of herself. And in the background, he thought he recognized Indio Rosario climbing out of a window.

“Oober, you’re alive!”

“What did you expect?”

“When the Cicadian took off with you...I thought the worst.”

“It’d take more than a few locusts to kill me.”

“They’re not really locusts. Timbals instead of stridulations. But go on...”

“I jumped overboard to escape her. Then I drifted at sea for days. Then I was picked up by the S.S. Samaritan, who just happened to be going my way.”

“You are a lucky man, Oober Mann.”

“Also, I need you to get me an audience with Governor Gewürtztraminer. I have an overwhelming urge to warn him of a possible Cicadian attack.”

“You could call that in...”

“No, I think it would be better in person.”

“You know what, I missed you when you were gone, Oober Mann. Call me crazy, but I think your spermatophores are starting to rub off on my proteonaceous spermatophylax.”

“It wouldn’t be the first time.”

“Now, whenever I’m near you, and I consider how important you think you are, I feel nauseous.”

“Bound to happen.”

“In fact, you make me ill to my abdomen.”

“Let’s cut the small talk and get to some real live action.”

They unstuck each adhesive on their matching adventurewear and leapt upon the bed. They rolled about the entire place passionately and eventually ended up sloshing about in some bathroom puddles.

“Mmm...this is the way we do it on Phasmidala.”

“I thought you wanted me for my brain.”

“Just for what’s waiting inside of it...mmm...and dying to get out...”

He seized her hips and began to exercise the ancestral pride of the Mann clan.

“Ooohmmm...this scene is sooo gratuitous!”

“Get me access to the governor!”

“Brat. Beast. Oooof.”

“You want those partita pieces of your friend back. What about what I want?”

“Oooooober!!!”

“Please, my little silverfish!”

“Yes yes yes...”

FIDGET

Through the miracle of modern Native technology and a magnificent editing job, Billy Joe Bearclaw and Flak Riesling were able to teleportage themselves upstream well ahead of the other boating party. Flak knelt at the base of a hillock and began to smear his body and face with mud.

“What are you doing, eh?”

“I need to blend in with these freaks.”

“That shouldn’t be too hard.”

Flak used his virtual invisibility to shield Billy Joe and they made their way without any trouble into the historical ruins of the *Nintendari* offices. And in the remodelled development department, they observed a focus group testing the latest product, a nanodroplet called *Fidget*. Some of the people behind the two way mirror were dancing. Some were tapping the side of their heads and howling. Some were trembling uncontrollably. A loudspeaker encouraged their mad erraticisms.

“*Nintendari* presents the *Fidget 4050*, the latest in total tetchiness, a sleek convergence model for the hypersuit on the flow. Stay connected and never again feel disconnected, from anything! What is the different between plopping down a plop tart and receiving an important tube and launching your own fragrance and exchanging pools in a Simbat system? With *Fidget*, there is no difference! Park your limuck up the wall and party at the same time to your favourite lime and tangerine grooves! Do this and a thrillion other things! Don’t just stand there! Get twitching with the bran new fudge-coloured *Fidget!*” A few members of the focus group were having trouble focussing. There was a lot of head-holding and eye-bulging and general screaming.

“Don’t...get...over...stimulated...”

“Too many lights...noises...”

“I semaphored for help and got a psychic line...”

“My brain is uncompressing again...”

“The bloody pornstars keep changing the channel...”

“Kill me! Please kill me!”

Then the loudspeaker switched to mukazz and a steady berating mantra.

“FIDGET FIDGET FIDGET...”

Everyone collapsed on the floor, twitching wildly before fainting dead away.

And at that moment, Terence Cockerel appeared with an antique gaming console in his hand.

“Yes, I admit, there are still a few kinks to work out.”

IN THESE DISTRESSING TIMES

Tonight she tentatively fingered in as Tranquila and found herself heaving open the rusty double doors of the Distressing Centre. The factory room was empty, except for three lurkers in the guise of Hunc, Homunculus and Erectus. The hint bubble immediately updated her status to OVERSEER in shimmering boots and peasant blouse and suggested an array of scenarios. She activated the randomizer function and launched into direct protocol.

“Hunc?”

“Mistress?”

“Lose the shirt.”

“But it is bran new, Mistress.”

“Precisely.”

She removed his pristine denim shirt and laid it upon oily floor before stomping all over it with her boot heels. She lit up and left a series of cigarette burns and lipstick marks upon the collar before dousing the whole shirt with a giant bottle of potassium permanganate, known in the business as PP. Hunc quietly blubbered, all the while trying to look tough. Next, Tranquila bid Homunculus remove his denim muscle shirt and extra loose jeans and slip into a nice and comfy acid wash bath.

“Oooh it burns...”

“Suck it up Homunculus!”

Tranquila watched his beautiful death, all the while slashing holes in his discarded denim ensemble. She turned to fetch Erectus, but he dropped his sandpaper gloves and ran. She hopped into a waiting chaser and pursued him the entire stretch of Indigo River. As he collapsed at the water’s edge, she seized his stonewash shorts and yanked them down.

“Mistress, no!”

“Erectus!”

They rolled and romped about in the blue and mauve water, and for the first time in her life she was reminded of her tender and confusing girlhood growing up near Chem Creek. And Erectus lived up to both his reputation and his moniker. In a gargantuan wink she was pregnant. She could sense this at once and began to weep. But Erectus comforted her and retrieved a fresh bottle of PP from the chaser.

“Drink this.”

“Our distressing bleach? Are you crazy?”

“It will take care of that querido bastardo.”

“¿En serio?”

“¡Es absolutamente necesario!”

Tranquila laughed and drank half the bottle.

“Why I’ve never felt less distressed!”

The announcer sensed the interactive agitation of the only participant jacked in and responded in kind.

“In these distressing times, *Toxic Teasewear* wants you to rip it right off. Because badder is better...”

THE SANDWICH

Ammonia Gig lifted the pitcher full of *Limeeenation* to her lips and drank, resisting the urge to spit it out. After all, she required the supplements to survive. She looked around anxiously. Werner would not be back for a while. She stuck her tongue out and slowly began to lick the side of the pitcher. She knew she might incite his anger if another item of cornware went missing but she simply couldn't resist. Then she heard deep laughter and the smacking of lips. She turned abruptly but saw and heard nothing but the mad mating cries of untermated cockadas. Yet she knew who had seen her transgression with the corn pitcher. She cursed her husband for hiring a pair of Droserans to manage his own domestic affairs. The way she was raised, she had grown up hearing nothing but curses and jibes about their way of life to the far south of Spermatophyta. However, it would be better to reason with them and not have Werner find out she was into the cornware. After all, what else did she have?

“Honey afternoon, Ma'am.”

“Very honey.”

They were using their sticky pedicels to lift and arrange bales of tofu. She watched them work for a while, noting the way they glistened with the sundew dripping down their irregular bodies. She cleared her throat and raised the pitcher.

“Want some?”

“Corn?”

“No, to drink.”

The larger Droseran named Chug spat to one side.

“That's poison, Missus.”

“Anything you need, then?”

“How about you, Ma'am?”

“What are you implying?”

Jar Jar put down his bales and hovered over to a spot behind her. She could still hear the crazed mating of cockadas and the strange buzzing sound of the two Droserans on either side of her.

“We see you lick corn.”

As Jar Jar droned this phrase more than once, the air filled with a sweet aroma and it reminded Ammonia of both salt and sugar, two things she had tasted only once in her life. Also, the mesmerizing movement of their glistening red tentacles was having a most peculiar effect upon her. She understood they were really just long thick bristles that had evolved into working appendages. But they certainly seemed sturdy and serviceable enough. Her breath

quicken as one of the pedicels lashed the pitcher out of her hand and two more tugged at the straps of her neglected. And when she was stripped bare, the sticky glands began to rub against her body, leaving transparent secretions. Ammonia touched them to her tongue and tasted the sugary salty substance she had lain awake dreaming of. Chug lay back on a bale of tofu, almost taunting her to taste the bouquet of stemming sweetness. She gripped a tentacle at the time and merrily sucked the tip of it while Jar Jar played with her body from behind. She leapt upon Chug as Jar Jar climbed on top of her.

“Like a sugar salt sandwich.”

“We only eat meat, Ma’am.”

“Whaaaaa...”

It took the entire afternoon for the two Droserans to utterly absorb her. When Werner returned that evening, he only found some broken shards of cornware covered in a sticky substance. And he heard nothing but the crazed mating of untermated cockadas.

THE NAME YOU’VE ALWAYS TRUSTED

The field of attention span flicks to demographic throb Beau Brood, seated in front of an equally resistant plate of übergrine. He scratches at his banana wifebeater and pokes at the enhanced purple foodstuff, clearly in a huff of sheer disgust.

“What the...”

A young woman in a powdered sugarsub hat appears and opens her canola coat, flashing her modified assets. This is the first time Beau Brood and Jen Mod have appeared in the same promotional aid.

“Tired of übergreens? You need to spazz up your life...with *Metaglut Superlative Mealies*.”

“You are such a glut!”

“You are.”

With Jen Mod jouncing on his lap, Beau takes a bite and stops pouting.

“Ho...tastes like deranged ficken!”

Then the steaming meal and organic container dissolved in a snap of fingers.

“And the selling point is no scrummy cleanup.”

“That is way deranged!”

“You are.”

Beau Brood began to cough and sneeze, eyes watering.

“That is so messed up.”

“*Metaglut* is a subsidiary of *Cornglom*, the name you’ve always trusted to induce change.”

Jen Mod giggled and waved her orange dusting wand over a field of muskmelons.

“Look for me, Jen Mod, on every box. Then you totally know the narkiest food has been made even nukier!”

Esmeralda Mercato felt her eyes drooping. She switched tubes several times but kept drifting off. Yet sleep did not bring rest. She felt so restless. She looked around furtively before reaching under the squash cushion and pulling out a very faded periodical. She froze as she heard blaring overbearing music. The front door burst open. Johannes Gleam surveyed the situation and set his men packing with an impish look. He lifted the periodical out of her hand.

“What do we have here?”

“It’s an issue of *Geojunk*.”

“Where did you get it?”

“I just happened upon it.”

“Your tubes registered a neural spikenarding.”

“Did you know that before those ghastly wars, Nutella once had a proud and crafty civilization?”

“Is that part of the volumes authorized by Minor?”

“I suppose not.”

“Minor died for our transgressions.”

“I suppose he did.”

Johannes whipped out his knowtorch and lit the tattered brown copy of *Geojunk*.

“I’ve got some more drugs, some more tubes and a spanking new library of Minor.”

“May I ask you something?”

“I am already falling heel over head for you, so yes, I imagine so.”

“Is it true that journalists used to provide new information instead of depriving people of it?”

“I’ve never heard of anything so absurd. We have always worked to give you what you want.”

“What I want?”

“Tubes, drugs, what you and your neighbours want.”

“And that is what I want.”

“Ultimately. It is what everyone wants to be happy.”

“And do you ever read the things you sussfiscate?”

Johannes suddenly remembered flipping through a yellowed copy of *Slank* but quickly pushed the thought from his mind before his dessicant monitor could detect the slip up.

“You have a lot of questions.”

“Your unijumper is so shiny. And I can’t seem to keep my clothes on either...”

“Take some more *Driftaway* and a few more *Pesadillas*. We can interface with some of the new tubes and have a happy little dumbing down.”

“And why do you have a six and a nine on the seat of your unijumper?”

“It’s for Fahrenheit 69, the exact temperature of this room, the precise temperature at which people lose interest.”