
Deaths at Azcruk

by Mike Rozak
Copyleft 2011

WARNING: This story is emotionally disturbing, at least for me as an author. In my humble opinion, while it is not as well written as Shirley Jackson's, "*The Lottery*", it is MUCH more macabre. The story is also sexually explicit.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shirley_Jackson,
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lottery)

"Myeh"- syndrome

To celebrate my "high-school" graduation, my older half-sister and I picked-up a guy to share for the night. Cheetahs don't pick-up guys at bars, or in hiking groups.



There aren't enough males in our society to come-across an acceptable male by chance. Only one in fifty individuals is male, partially because we are male-zygote infertile. The Hominid infertility-bots, and anti-fertility foods that occasionally sneak through our borders, don't help. We aren't affected nearly as badly as Cat-evolved people by Hominid chemicals, though.

And practically-speaking, being a Cheetah-man has problems.

Males are less-intelligent than females due to millions of years of war, where killing-off less-common males is more-strategic than killing-off very-common females. After every war, we have to rebuild our male DNA from low-intelligence "primitive" males that weren't involved in the war, mostly because they were 60-IQ individuals running around naked, trying to kill springboks with blunt arrows.

And if you're one-in-fifty, you don't have many same-sex piers to socialize with... and the opposite gender thinks of you as sex-meat. So many men swap to women's bodies after a few years of adulthood, for free. Women that want a new body, unless they wish to become men, need to pay about \$20,000 – the price of a small car.

Cheetah women pick-up guys in the internet. Every city has at-least half-a-dozen interactive databases, accessible from home. They show a 360-degree rotation of the male, his school permanent records, median skill-and-personality ratings of the women that have gone for him, and median ratings of his "performance".

As I said, males are treated as sex-meat.

In my city, there were eleven companies from which to pick-up guys. They all had their own referral-system, working like *Amazon.com's* book referrals. The systems collect your ratings of

previous guys you have used, and match those ratings against other women's rating-sets. A list of women with similar-preferences to yours is generated, but not shown. A collection of possible male-names is assembled from the other women's ratings, along with estimates about how-well you might rate-them. The system identifies which males are currently available, and sorts them into a *"Recommended for you!"* list.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon.com>)

Except for three expensive companies, men are first-come, first-serve. (They also have access to your ratings, by the way. They can refuse to go out with you.) There are no guarantees that the men you have chosen will be there when you show up at the company's "store". Consequently, the referral-system has E-mail notification. It waits until three or four acceptable men are all working on the same night, and then E-mails you. Your chance of getting one of them is greatly improved.

All of the "stores" allow two or three women to go-in-together at-a-time. Their computer-matching system makes-sure that at least two women have a *"★Top-choice★ male, and the third won't be disappointed either."*

For one of my graduation gifts, my older half-sister and I went-in together. She paid. I paid for the taxi-ride there, and to a second "store", and then back to our apartment. I'll censor the rest.

Mothers, while having done the same thing when they were young, never condone of such activity *"unless you wish to get pregnant."* Normally, it is best to hide such adventures from your mother. Regretfully, my sister and I didn't have a mother that we could sneak *"the deed"* past.

My mother died when I was in junior-high. Her spaceplane was shot-down by Hominids while she fought as a fighter-pilot in our marines. She never came back.

And I was quite dense, but I'll tell you about that later...

My relatives took care of my household finances and shopping for a few months. They then found a distant and unknown-to-me older half-sister to move-in and take care of me. The fact that I had distant-and-unknown half-sisters didn't surprise me. Cheetahs don't remember individuals that well. Unless I had met someone fifty times, I wouldn't remember what they looked like, smelled like, who they were, or even what their name was.

My newly-discovered half-sister and I got-along exceptionally well, despite the age difference. She attended high-school while I was in junior-high. I just-missed walking to school with her every morning; the same year I escaped from junior-high, she graduated from high-school and went-on to study physics at university.

In junior-high, I'd arrive home at 2:00 PM. She would show up at 5:00 PM with takeaway-food, or we'd walk down to a bistro together. There, we would sit and watch people walk-past, until sunset... Cheetahs are mesmerized by "watching". Of course, bistro-sitting was only allowed on the nights when I had no homework... or if I managed to finish my homework before dinner-time. *"We can't sit in the cafe all evening [and watch people pass-by]. You have to do your homework,"* my half-sister would say, mother-like.

By high-school, I was mature-enough to manage my own homework schedule. My sister's university-classes ended at the same time as my high-school classes. After school, we would bypass home, and meet in a bistro or non-alcoholic bar. Bar-sitting was different than cafe-sitting. Bars were indoors and stayed open

later. The entertainment was short films, cabaret-style acts, country-western rock-bands, and watching all of the patrons watch all-of-the-patrons. We would typically eat a meal of elk shish-kebobs, followed by an “appetizer” of breadsticks dipped in barbeque sauce, with two-or-three mango drinks or mango lassis. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lassi>)

On weekends, we’d wander the store-strip, to see who else was wandering the store-strip. We never actually knew nor cared who the people were. Seeing an anonymous Cheetah with a particularly-nice black-bead necklace and red high-heeled shoes was enough. During-and-after Cheetah watching, we would sit in street-cafe chairs with accompanying mini-table. And in-between that, we’d go shopping... for particularly-nice black-bead necklaces and purple high-heeled shoes. I didn’t limit myself to just purple; I also wore other varieties of high-heeled shoes, including red.

I was very-good friends with my half-sister.

After our graduation-gift tryst with a male, my half-sister, acting as my mother, got down to harassing me about what I wanted to do after high-school.

I had graduated from “high-school” a few months before, at age twenty. I performed well-enough, about the 60% mark. At that point, my sister’s “*What will your career be?*”-nags really dug into me. I still had a few months before I had to decide on a career. I planned either to enter university, or to learn a trade on-the-job.

Joining the (space) marines like my mother did, was out. I never was one to follow orders, or instructions. My mother’s combat-death, and the thought of following her shadow into the military, was foreboding. I imagined that I’d be standing in the military registration-hall, thinking to myself, “*This is what my mother did,*” followed by a spark of sadness. And then a few

months later, I'd enter "boot camp" – a flight-simulator video-arcade with attached dorms – thinking, "This is what my mother did," with even more sadness. And then everyday thereafter, I'd think, "This is what my mother did," and the depression would grow.

As far as university... *myeh.*

I could have gone on to business-school... *myeh.*

Mathematics... No way!

Engineering ... *myeh.*

Physics ... No.

Social-work... less- *myeh.*

Writing and journalism ... maybe.

Overall... *myeh.*

Acting motherly, which my half-sister occasionally succumbed to, she brought-home several post-high-school work-study-volunteer pamphlets. They included camping holidays on remote planets. A "painting tour" where I would travel to half-a-dozen planets and paint landscapes. A work-study home-construction trip. And a "work-holiday" at one of the military branches. All of the programs lasted half-a-year or a full-year. They were inexpensive, only \$2000; the painting-tour may have been \$4000.

Myeh, and NO to the military work-holidays.

I settled on a work-volunteer program that was interesting to me; it combined social-work with a potential entryway into exotic journalism.

Two months later, I packed-up a few crates of clothing... mostly shoes... and a few books.

I boarded a spaceplane to a planet-equivalent to one of your small African villages.

And as for the “*I was quite dense*” remark earlier: My half-sister was my mother. I just found that out, recently. When her body died in a spaceplane “accident”, she decided to give-up on the military, and try-out high-school again. The bastard (my mother) thought it would be fun to play the role of my older sister. And it was fun, for both her and me.

Work-study-volunteer with “primitive” Cheetahs

My final spaceplane on the journey to my work-volunteer program was a small triangle-craft. It looked like it had been shot-down a few too-many times. The seats were coffee-stained hessian, with claw-torn carpet underneath. The meal was a cold rectangle of curried beef... accompanied by an orange-flavoured drink similar to Tang. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tang \(drink\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tang_(drink)))

We landed on the tarmac, and disembarked. There were no enclosed boarding ramps. I dragged my travelling chests underneath a ratty steel-awning, and sheltered from the drizzle for a few hours. When the bus/minivan/4WD combo arrived, all I noticed was its amazingly-large tires. Cheetahs are city-dwellers.

The Simian-driven 4WD drove six of us off the tarmac, and through a large town. When the town ended, so did the road. It turned into a gravelly muddy track, with copious potholes, creek-crossings, and dodgy bridges.

Sitting in a 4WD on an off-road trip is bumpy and painful-enough for people who don't have tails. Cheetahs can sit on their tails, but not for four hours of bumps. Thirty minutes into the trip, I tried sitting with one leg folded underneath me, but the bumps

began to eat at my hip and knee. Standing didn't work. It was too-painful for the back of my head, and neck. The base of my tail was swollen for days afterwards, hurting whenever it wagged.

We'd drive through a small village every half hour. The village-centres consisted of a handful of brick buildings, and a dozen wood-built village-houses. The houses were built by Hominids a hundred years before, but sold to us about fifty years ago. They were simple one-and-two story boxes with a front porch, similar to the American-Foursquare style. I saw many Syn-Cheetahs walking on the sidewalks as we passed.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Foursquare)

Between the village centres were 5-25 hectare lots, each with their own farm-house, perhaps a barn, and a wooden fence. Dairy-cattle and goats grazed in the paddocks.

We travelled through a half-a-dozen villages on the way, eventually stopping at my assigned village. Its central business-district had a few brick shops, a dozen 100-year-old Hominid houses, and a more-recently-built two-story apartment complex.

My apartment was on the top floor, at the end of the row. It was located directly over my boss' apartment, who came out to greet me as I bump-banged my crates up the stairs. The keys for the apartment were in the door.

Being an urban cafe-sitting Cheetah, I found my surrounds distinctly-and-completely rural, and un-Cheetah-like hickish. It was only for a year. I could manage.

Work-study-volunteer with “primitive” Cheetahs

The planet, where I would spend the next year, was a shared-but-divided multiracial planet. The section I had been driven through was ours, where we raised our “young”.

Most of the Cheetahs where “Syn” Cheetahs, named after the planet where they were found. To us, they looked more animal-like. They were more reddish than us, had a slightly-musty odour, hunched hackles, and they didn’t walk erect.

Their personality was different from ours; they didn’t mind living in the boondocks, and they could almost stomach raising dairy cattle, beef cattle, and small livestock like goats. Chickens didn’t work; they always intentionally left the chicken-coop door open so that the chickens would disappear.

Their median IQ was about 80.

With some genetic modifications, we could raise their IQs to 120. That problem was known and solvable, mostly a matter of having their brains synthesize chemicals to produce more white-matter. This would make them more-intelligent, but also “twitchier” – more-likely to go psychotic and/or insane. Adding the chemicals was like accelerating a bicycle from 20-kmph to 100-kmph. Personality flaws, mental illnesses, and neurological autoimmune-diseases not visible at 20-kmph, became life-threatening at 100-kmph.

One personality flaw common to all Cheetahs, especially “primitive” Cheetahs like the Syn-Cheetahs, was “*myeh*” syndrome. As teenagers, our favourite phrase is, “*Myeh*”, which means, “*I don’t care,*” combined with “*Leave it until tomorrow,*” combined with “*I’m bored, so I’ll find something else to entertain myself.*”

Adult Syn-Cheetahs, especially those below 90-IQ, were completely “*myeh*”, almost all of the time. This meant that the Syn-Cheetah sub-race hadn’t “baked” enough. They were distinctly unemployable, and would never “function” as part of a technological society. They would certainly survive in a world of automobiles, computers, and televisions, but due to adult “*myeh*” syndrome, they would never work a day in their lives.

For example...

More-responsible Syn-Cheetahs were given jobs at the local general store, which sold groceries, pillows, some underwear, a couple shapes of screwdrivers, and other stuff. I once stopped by the store for food, to find it empty of any staff, usually a lone Syn-Cheetah who was supposed to take the money and stock the shelves. She most-likely decided to take a few hours off-work, and wander-up to the local stream, and have a lie-down.

The store was left unlocked and unattended.

Syn-Cheetahs who visited the unattended store wouldn’t steal anything. They would pick-up the goods they needed, stand by the counter for five minutes, waiting for the missing cashier to step out of the backroom, and then realize that the Syn-Cheetah cashier must have gone on walkabout. Obviously, customers weren’t allowed to access the till themselves, since that would invite theft. Like any good citizen, the Syn-Cheetah customer would remember what items they had in hand, and leave without paying for them. They would pay tomorrow or the next day. Despite their intention to pay for the goods the next time they were in the store, the Syn-Cheetah would inevitably forget to pay, merely because Cheetahs are absentminded in odd ways.

Another example of adult “*majehi*” syndrome...

If we boosted the median IQs of Syn-Cheetahs to 120, they might-perhaps decide to work. Such work would be erratic and eccentric. They might decide to paint all of the brick buildings in town a bright pink. Getting bored after painting 11.26% of the buildings’ surfaces, they would leave the other 88.74% natural.

What excited us about the Syn-Cheetahs was that at 90-IQ, they could mentally-endure raising dairy-cattle and goats. They could wake themselves up at sunrise, milk the cattle, let them into the paddocks, and clean their stalls. Then the women would revert to pure somewhat-hickish Cheetahs for the day. In the evening, they would remember to fill their barn’s feed-troughs with daisy-grass and grains, and heard the cattle back into their barn for the night. That was two hours of work a day.

A Syn-Cheetah with 100-IQ might be able to manage ten cows, three hours of work. And maintain a tractor.

A civilized-Cheetah with a 120-IQ can endure six hours of work a day. We won’t go near a farmhouse, let-alone a rural village, or anywhere where high-heeled shoes are inappropriate. We are perfectly-happy with desk-jobs though.

The civilized-Cheetahs in my team were tasked with “maturing” the “primitive” Syn-Cheetahs, ultimately allowing the Syn-Cheetahs’ median IQ to be safely raised from 80 to 120. Imagine what sane 120-IQ Syn-Cheetahs could do for our society. Eighty-cows per 120-IQ Syn-Cheetah, including full farm-equipment. With 120-IQ Syn-Cheetahs, our society might actually be able to raise its own food.

To better-understand the societal craving, imagine what kind of mobile-phones (and televisions) sane Earth-Sol “geeks” could create for you if they had 180-IQs instead of 140-IQs. Not only

would the gadgets be ultra-thin and ultra-small (or ultra-large), mere-mortals would be able to use them. Insane Earth-Sol “geeks” create mobile-phones (and televisions) with features that only 11.26% of the population can figure-out.

My job was to monitor the Syn-Cheetahs as individuals, and note which ones seemed most-capable, and most-willing to work reliably.

I was specifically instructed to NOT penalize the individuals for *mych*-syndrome. Millions of years of experience “maturing” “primitive” Cheetahs has shown that you cannot get rid of *mych*-syndrome; you can only divert it. All attempts to eradicate *mych*-syndrome have led to chronic depression in *mych*-free cheetahs.

My observations would be entered into our stud-book. Top-performing Syn-Cheetahs would be artificially inseminated with sperm from Cheetah males from elsewhere, often from civilized-Cheetah males. There were no male Syn-Cheetahs left, that we could find on any of the Syn-Cheetah planets; they may have combed-and-primped their manes into self-extinction. When a few months old, the embryos would be extradimensionally removed from the top-performing Syn-Cheetahs, and transplanted to underperforming Syn-Cheetahs. The underperforming Syn-Cheetahs would raise the embryos to term, give birth, and raise the children until they were teenagers. Despite adult *mych*-syndrome, Syn-Cheetahs had no problems raising children. We once thought about painting all of the dairy cattle yellow-gold with black spots. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breed_registry)

To help me observe Syn-Cheetah individuals, I was employed to interact with them. My must-do job was to run the social-room, which had some armchairs, a ping-pong table, and a large

television. Nearly every night, I would provide a buffet meal, and some sort of social activity.

Ping-pong nights didn't work; Syn-Cheetahs like playing ping-pong during the day. Not at night. And they don't like watching others play ping-pong. *Myeh*-syndrome Syn-Cheetahs wander-off even before they have eaten the free food.

Movie nights worked better, especially Hominid special-effects movies, like *Star Wars*. Most Syn-Cheetahs would wander-off after eating and watching half-an-hour of the movie. Some would last an hour. I would shut-off the video-player as soon as everyone left. I never saw the end of any of the *Star Wars* movies. I didn't know that the orange-clothing guy managed to blow up the *Death Star*. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Star_wars, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_star)

Once-a-week Cheetah-karaoke to *Beatles* music kept most Cheetahs interested for an hour, and some stayed for the full two hours. Many would even spend the morning practicing lewd dance-moves to their favourite songs, even learning English so they could understand the meaning of the lyrics. "*Yellow submarine*" was sexually-suggestive to Syn-Cheetahs, especially with accompanying dance-moves.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beatles>, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow_Submarine_\(song\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow_Submarine_(song)))

My job also included limited financial-management duties in the general store, such as counting the cash and ordering supplies.

I was also supposed to check-up on the local farms, to make sure the cows were still alive, that the houses weren't trashed, and that the appliances and equipment mostly-worked. *Myeh*. I never bothered.

And, of course, I'd walk the village-streets, and chat with any Syn-Cheetahs I came across.

I found the work-volunteer position to be enjoyable and interesting.

The job wasn't all-enjoyable though...

Many Syn-Cheetahs would walk north a few kilometres to a picturesque shady-stream, where they would lie-about in the grass, and watch the trees sway, as well as the birds flit between the trees. I only walked to the creek once, to check on my Syn-Cheetahs... Too-much nature. No shops either.

Syn-Cheetahs would nightly gather in the parking-lot behind the general-store to inject low-narcotic stims. I often had to round some of them up for an evening shish-kebob dinner and activity. I was loath to see them destroying themselves that way.

And then there were the Hominid military-men...

Hominid military

Many of the Syn-Cheetahs would just disappear for the afternoon, or for days at a time. Or they would disappear forever.

The Syn-Cheetahs would walk a few-kilometres north to the creek, where they would be picked-up by a Simian-driven taxi-van. The van would free-ride them to the Hominid military-base, half an hour away. The base had been licensed to the Hominids for multiracial purposes, which their legal-department interpreted as "military". My spaceplane had to land four-hours drive away from the village because of the Hominid military-claims to the airspace around their base.

The Hominid-men there looked like the male-lead in the movie, *Avatar*. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avatar_\(2009_film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avatar_(2009_film)))

We spent many hours puzzling-out what the Syn-Cheetahs did there; Cheetahs don't divulge much information, especially when asked questions.

As the Syn-Cheetahs told it, the Hominid men were "interesting".

The woman didn't claim or admit to having sexual relationships with the Hominid men. Nor did we believe that the Syn-Cheetahs engaged in sex with the men, which wouldn't have mattered, except for sociological studies.

They must have gotten drugs from them.

And food.

As far as we could tell, the Syn-Cheetahs merely sat around the men's houses, and perhaps talked to the men. The women admitted to learning the local Hominid language and listening to Hominid music. They would act, to-an-extent, like very-large house cats, always watching, sometimes interacting, coming-and-going when they wanted.

We didn't particularly object to that either.

The problem was that over the last few years, more-and-more Syn-Cheetahs disappeared from their villages. At first, we thought that they had wandered to nearby villages, or caught a bus to more-distant villages. As we grew more concerned, we kept better records.

The Syn-Cheetahs weren't relocating to other villages.

The most-likely scenario was that they were being flown-off the planet by the Hominids. Cheetah-staff drove to the Hominid base to investigate. The Hominid men became very cagey, and wouldn't let us enter the military complex "*for security reasons*".

Syn-Cheetahs were allowed into the military-base without any apparent concern.

We suspected, and now know, that Syn-Cheetahs were lured-off the planet, into slavery, as both an act of capitalism, and as racial vandalism.

Rounded-up and enslaved

Three months into my work-volunteer project with the Syn-Cheetahs, two large Hominid armoured-vehicles drove into the village. They weren't supposed to ever drive into our village. The vehicles looked like grey-painted armoured bank cash-delivery trucks.

I was standing at the crossroads in town. I had just been to the supermarket to purchase small-goods for the night's television dinner. My boss was with me.

The trucks stopped in front of us.

The back-doors opened.

Several Hominid-men jumped out. They were wearing navy-blue ablative-armour, helmets, and held truncheons, and most-likely guns.

The two of us glared at the men. This was our territory. They were uninvited males... and they were Hominids that were breaking legal agreements.

The men approached us.

"Get in [the armoured truck]," the men said in their language. Our translator-implants worked.

"On what grounds?" asked-demanded my boss.

“Medical tests.”

The Hominid military-men weren't allowed to give us medical tests, and they most-certainly weren't allowed to force medical-tests on us. They were liars. We were being detained, most-likely for political reasons.

We saw a distant civilized-Cheetah watch the scene, and disappear someplace safe. She would report the incident, and someone would get us out.

Carrying our groceries, both my boss and I climbed into the armoured vehicle's sealed back-box. A few Syn-Cheetahs were inside, being *myeh* about the abduction. Cheetah-like, they went-along with reality to see where it took them.

Cheetahs tend to accept reality as it is. When reality takes us in interesting directions, we don't fight reality. Sometimes it's more-interesting to let reality drive, and see where it takes you, than to try and steer reality in a direction you think you will prefer. Conversely, Hominids will scream bloody-murder whenever reality diverges from their expectation of ordinary existence.

We were driven through the village farms for another ten minutes. Two-more Syn-Cheetahs were detained, without much protest.

All of us were closed in the back, and then driven north to the base on the unsealed road.

Three-quarters of an hour later, the doors opened, and we were led into a small one-story wood building, where we were seated.

No medical examination was forthcoming. We were glad for that.

After two hours of sitting, we were led onto a shuttle-spaceplane, and seated. Our hands were twist-tied in front of us.

We concluded that we had been arrested by the Hominids for political reasons, and were about to be transported to their planet. We watched reality take us for a ride.

The shuttle took-off materialized, shifted extradimensionally, and then found a hyperspace entryway. We travelled through the topologically-complex space for perhaps an hour.

The shuttle emerged from hyperspace, and entered material space just-above an enormous airport tarmac, perhaps ten-kilometres to a side. The number-and-size of Hominid commercial and military spaceplanes was staggering.

We landed.

The doors opened.

A pair of Syn-Cheetahs was escorted-off the shuttle, and then disappeared.

My boss and I were next.

We were directed to an empty van, driven several kilometres, and loaded onto another shuttle.

The situation had become more-interesting. We had expected to be thrown into detention at the nearest planet. Instead, we were going to be transferred to a second planet. The passengers in our new spaceplane-shuttle were Canine-evolved and Goat-evolved.

Our second shuttle-flight was shorter.

The airport where we landed was small and provincial.

A goat-evolved woman and I were led-off the spaceplane first. A Hominid man-woman with a clipboard directed us into a nearby airport-shuttle van, similar to airport shuttles on Earth-Sol. A Malamute-evolved woman, a Fox-evolved woman, and an Antelope-evolved women were aboard.

We sat on cushioned aisle-benches, built against the left-and-right walls of the van. During the ride, our heads repeatedly inertia-bumped into the windows behind.

The van's doors closed, and it slowly accelerated up to speed.

I was beginning to worry. I had been separated from my fellow Cheetah, and was now alone. This didn't fit with the typical Hominid "*we will arrest and detain you for awhile*" scenario that I had heard about.

We were driven-off the airport tarmac, and through a small city with multi-story brick and/or concrete buildings. Cincinnati Ohio would look similar. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cincinnati>)

Ten minutes later, the buildings gave way to suburbs with Colonial-revival and ranch-style houses.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonial_Revival_architecture, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ranch-style_house)

The suburbs lasted for twenty-minutes, and then we were in semiarid eucalypt farmland.

We soon turned-off the sealed road, and onto an unsealed road, which eventually turned into an unsealed track.

My original hypothesis was political detention, and perhaps a sham trial. Most-likely, the detention-cells and/or courthouse wouldn't be this far outside the city-centre.

Was there any way I could escape from the situation?

My wrists were bound with twist-ties. I was in a locked moving van. And on a Hominid planet.

Not likely.

After an hour-and-a-half ride total, the van stopped in front of a lone house. The house was set twenty-meters back, and surrounded by a quarter of a hectare of mowed-dried grass.

The Malamute-woman was escorted off the airport shuttle-bus, and then held-standing in front of the house.

"Honk. Honk," went the shuttle-bus's horn.

A man ambled out of the house, and talked with the guard who held onto the Malamute-woman.

The man had brought-along stainless-steel handcuffs, which he placed around the woman's wrists. Her redundant twist-ties were cut, and she was led into the house.

Slavery.

Closet maid

The airport shuttle-bus drove a kilometre down the road.

This time, I was led off.

I was stood in front of a two-story box-house with a gabled roof, and a front porch. The parched lawn was enclosed by a white picket-fence. A ranch-style house was behind me, directly across the road. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American Foursquare](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Foursquare))

The driver didn't have-to beep his horn.

An obese battle-axe of-a-woman shambled out of house, down her aging concrete sidewalk, and through the swinging gate of the short-white picket-fence. Something was in her hand.

I was stood about ten meters away.

The driver stood by me, while the guard walked up to the woman and spoke to her. I couldn't understand their language. My telepathy language-translators must-have been blocked.

After her brief chat with the guard, the woman looked at me gleefully.

The driver held me in position so I was facing the woman's house. The obese woman and guard walked in a wide arc around me, and then behind me, out of view.

I heard the two walk-up to just-behind me. I could acoustically-tell that the guard and the woman were a head shorter than me.

Something was placed around my neck, and then clasped on. I couldn't see what it was.

Someone played with my skirt-buckles, and then dropped my skirt to the ground. They couldn't completely take it off me though, without my stepping forward.

Cheetahs don't wear underwear.

I was naked.

This was all part of the humiliation.

The woman walked-around into view, holding onto a black leash. The collar they had placed around my neck swivelled with the leash.

She was "frabjous". (Redefined from *Jabberwocky*, to mean a combination of gloating and happy.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jabberwocky>)

With a pair of wire-cutters, the guard cut the twist-ties that bound my hands in front of me.

I lowered my hands to my side.

Dignity.

Yeah, well, it was worth an attempt.

Some footfalls came from across the road, behind me. They stopped to my rear-left, admiring me as a new possession of their neighbour. A husband and wife approached the frabjous woman, walking into view.

Some greetings and comments passed. I didn't understand them.

Enslaved.

I decided to see where life took me.

The driver spoke, the woman replied, and then both the driver and guard got into the airport shuttle-bus. It started-up, and drove down the road. The three remaining non-Hominid people in the van would be anticipating their enslavement-stops.

After the shuttle-bus had departed, I was collar-led through the woman's white-picket-fence gate.

The frabjous woman was stocky, obese, had dark curly-hair, and wore a blue floral dress. Her male neighbour was a thin, balding man. His wife was slightly less-obese, with sandy-brown hair. The neighbours were curious about me, as a new-and-expected arrival, but not frabjous.

I was led up the front-porch steps, and into a combination living-room and study. It contained an old Persian-like carpet, some embroidered furniture, a radio, a coffee-table, and a desk with a computer-terminal on it.

Now what?

I followed-along for the ride, merely observing.

I was collar-led into the kitchen through a doorway in the living-room.

The neighbour-woman spotted a loaded knife-block and an exposed knife on the kitchen counter. She grabbed the knife-block and knife, and placed them out of view. The neighbour-woman mentioned something to the obese battle-axe, who said “*Da blah blah blah*” in approval.

My leash was handed to the neighbour-husband, who held it, not knowing what to do with it.

The gloating battle-woman walked all-around my front, surveying me to make sure that I was as advertised, and that I had no on-arrival dings or scratches. She would have walked the full 360-degree visual-survey, but my back was close-enough to the refrigerator that she couldn’t squeeze behind.

I stood erect, and stared forward.

“*Blah blah blah,*” they spoke to one-another.

The obese-woman located a dirty dishrag on her kitchen counter. She held it in front of me, at stomach height.

Was she handing it to me?

I slowly took hold of the rag. It was dry. And it reeked of perfume, and of must.

My audience watched in anticipation.

What did they expect me to do with the rag?

Obviously, I was to clean something.

I was the woman’s new kitchen appliance. She had just unpacked me. Passing me the dish rag was equivalent to plugging me in, and pressing the “*Go*” button. I was supposed to show the obese-woman that I worked properly, or I would be returned to the store as a defect. And I was also supposed to show myself off to the neighbours.

Perhaps I should have acted broken-like.

I walked forward.

The gloating-woman stepped-off to the side.

I began wiping-down the counter.

The rag was dry, and would never clean. I opened-up the tap, and wet the rag.

Then I began to wipe.

I could feel the woman gloat behind me.

Finished wiping-down the counter, I un-scrunched the rag, folded it in half, and hung it over the kitchen faucet to dry. She had left it scrunched. That's why it had gotten musty.

What else could this wonderful machine do? She must have wondered.

Standing in front of the kitchen counter, looking out the sash window, I felt a tug at my collar. It pulled me back, and to the right.

I was collar-led into a different living-room. This one was smaller, and had a vacuum-tube television in the corner. The television was off.

Positioned for television-watching was a felt-like burgundy armchair.

The battle-axe handed my collar's leash to her woman-friend. She was thrilled to be in control, and a bit nervous.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keeping_Up_Appearances)

The obese woman then scuttled-out a doorway to the right, into a dining-room.

A minute later, I heard her in the kitchen, behind me. A few kitchen drawers opened and closed.

Thirty-seconds seconds after the last drawer close-banged, a light-blue dusting rag was suspended over my shoulder, directly in-front of my face. It smelled dusty.

I was given another token cleaning assignment.

I could operate the woman's computer-terminal for her if she wanted. I might-even be able to repair it.

Oh well. Cleaning was a good use of my skills.

I accepted the dusting-rag.

And I steadied my tail to make sure it wouldn't accidentally swing and brush-up against her. Tails are particularly sensitive.

What needed dusting?

Nothing, really.

What would make a good demonstration for her?

I walked over to her television and dusted the top of it.

"Blah blah blah." They spoke to one-another.

I already loathed and hated these people.

They still watched me whirl, appliance like.

What else needed dusting?

Perhaps something in the next room, to the right.

I nonchalantly dusted my way to the right, and into the dining-room.

The dining-room table needed dusting... not really. But it was dustable.

The three continued to watch.

What did they expect me to do? Would they follow me around the entire house as I dusted?

The tops of the mahogany chairs looked dusty... but they weren't.

More?

I dusted the oak hutch against the wall. It might-perhaps have been slightly dusty.

Where had they hidden the knives?

I turned around, and glanced at the trio.

Still more?

If I continued the arc around the house, the entry-foyer was next, with its exit-door. And then back into the woman's living-room.

I headed in that direction.

Oops.

The man bolted in front of me, to prevent me from running out the door. I hadn't even thought about doing that. Escape was not a priority at the moment.

Someone's chubby finger poked me in the back.

Grimace.

I walked forward.

My collar swivelled to the left, and the leash-tugged me, from behind and to the right.

I had never ridden a horse, but this must be how a horse felt.

A stairway to the upstairs was on my right. From the collar-tug, I understood that I was to turn to my right, perhaps facing the stairs.

I did so.

My rider, or was she an ox-team driver, stepped immediately behind me, and once-again poked me with her finger. I steadied my tail.

Dusting-rag in hand, I proceeded to slowly walk up the stairs.

The obese woman followed a few steps behind. Not only was she lower on the staircase, but she was shorter, and she must have held the collar-leash low at waist-height, and she was further back.

And the woman found it difficult to walk up the stairs.

When I was half-way up, her slow pace and fumbling arms nearly pulled me over backwards. The leash she had tightly grasped, tugged forcefully at the collar around my neck. I had to

grab hold of the stairway railing to prevent me from tumbling back onto her.

I was tempted to grab a-hold of my collar with both hands. Both a practical way of balancing myself, and a way to communicate to her that she had nearly toppled me.

Dignity.

I continued walking up the stairs, hand grasping the railing.

The obese-bitch was puffing by the time she reached the top.

I was collar-reigned to the right.

A doorway in that direction led into a room with a steeply-angled ceiling.

I slowly walked into the room. At its highest, the room's ceiling was 2.0 meters high, falling down to 1.2 meters at wall, in front of me. The room was empty, except for a sewing-machine against the right wall. The sewing-machine mini-desk sat underneath a curtain-less divided window.

The reigns pulled back. I halted.

My control-strap was handed to someone else.

No-longer afraid of me, the obese woman jostled around me, and ambled to the 1.2-meter-high painted wood-panel wall in front of me.

She undid a latch, and opened a cupboard doorway into an attic crawlspace.

She motioned with her arm for me to enter.

She had to be kidding.

Grimace.

Was that my room?

Fuck her.

I slowly walked forward, and then encountered an embarrassing problem when my forehead nearly touched the steeply-angled ceiling.

I couldn't crouch and walk. I would have to crawl-in on my hands and knees.

I bent down, and then onto my hands and knees.

The trio saw the gesture as somehow fitting of my animal-ness.

I crawled forward, my head now inside the dark triangular-cavity.

I flicked my tail-up as a rude gesture to them.

Inside was a thin and stale mattress. A pillow. And some sheets.

I crawled onto the mattress.

Before I got all of the way in, my collar tugged me backwards.

I stopped.

What now?

The woman unhooked the leash from the collar... inadvertently touching my tail.

Eye-grimace.

Still on my hands and knees, the bottom of my right-foot was "gently" prodded by her shoed foot... without reigns to communicate to me, the foot-tap must-have meant that I was to crawl forward.

I did so.

Once fully inside, the door closed.

It was locked.

Something heavy was pushed in front of the door, ensuring that I couldn't kick-out the door.

I lay on the shallow mattress, in the darkness, a new kitchen-appliance, packed-away into a bitch-Hominid's cupboard.

An under-employed kitchen appliance

The thick collar around my neck didn't come off. It was held-on by two small luggage-locks.

The attic storeroom was empty except for my bed equipment.

Shingle nail-points stuck through the wood sub-roof. If I really tried, I might be able to impale the nails a couple of centimetres into my skull.

What was a Cheetah to do in my position? I decided to see where reality led me.

The next morning, an hour after the birds went off, the all-in-one sewing-machine short-desk that weighted my door shut, was pushed aside.

A U-lock was unlocked, and clank-deposited on the short-desk. My door was opened.

While crawling out forwards on hands and knees – again, I couldn't walk in a crouched position – the battle-axe bitch clipped the leash onto the collar. She had-to first reach underneath my neck, and swivel the collar so the locks and leash-hole were in back. I think she was nervous that I might bite her.

I was forced to embarrassingly crawl half-way into the room before I could stand up. Being naked didn't bother me. But because the Hominids saw nudity as a degradation, I was angered.

When I stood up, my eyes to the battle-axes head-top, I noticed the long iron pry-bar clenched in her right hand. She held it level, intending to use it as a distance-device in case I attacked. Undoubtedly, she'd have no qualms about bashing my head with it. The pry-bar's swing might be stopped by the low ceiling though.

Using the long pry-bar to ensure that I was kept distant, and the leash to pull me close, the woman walked around, and behind me.

I was poked in the back with the iron.

Forward, horse!

I walked into the second-floor stair-hallway.

The woman obviously preferred poking to reigns. A hard tap on my right ribs indicated that I should turn left... I think.

The stairway led down that way.

I turned left, and walked down the stairs.

The woman followed, this time tugged by me.

If I really wanted to, I could have lunged down the stairs, perhaps taking her with me. I could then have grabbed her iron pry-bar; it would have fallen out of her hands. No matter. I could grab it at any time I wanted.

At the base of the stairs, I was poked into her computer-room.

On the walnut coffee-table was a dusting-rag and a feather-duster.

For the next hour, I was poked and prodded around the house, dusting. Occasional grunts from the woman, not words, meant that I had missed something, or that I needed to clean higher.

The house didn't need to be dusted at all.

Her kitchen-counter had a blotch of spilled raspberry jam. She could have at least left me some dirty dishes.

The knives were distinctly missing.

Cleaning took approximately one-hour. It would have taken less-time if I hadn't been collared, poked, and prodded. It would have taken even less time if I only cleaned the dirty surfaces.

After that, I was led upstairs and locked away for the day. The ENTIRE day. And the ENTIRE night. And most of the next morning.

This routine continued every day, gradually turning less-and-less restrictive.

I was eventually allowed to clean without the woman following me with the iron poker, then without her following me but with the leash tied to some furniture, and then without the leash tied to anything. I was never able to shed the leash, nor the tall-black collar she had locked around my neck. Fleas and ticks would eventually infest underneath it.

The moron-bitch eventually gave me water, on the third day... after I boldly grabbed a clean glass, filled it from the tap, and drunk thirstily.

I was fed by the fourth or fifth day. A bread-roll with some processed cheese. She once put mayonnaise on it for me, which tasted INCREDIBLY good to me. We Cheetahs are not vegetarians, nor are we granivores.

The woman ate when I ate, sitting opposite at a tiny tile-covered kitchen-table. She made herself a sliced roast-beef sandwich on a bread roll, with at least 100-grams of meat. Some days she ate ham. And she'd eat a dessert, such as strawberries with whipped cream.

I was only ever fed a bread-roll, completely nutrition-free for me, with processed cheese, 95% nutrition-free.

That wasn't her only neglect.

The first time the bitch thought to let me toilet – I had already used the corner of my attic-nook at night since I had no other choice – she took me outside behind her house.

She led me to a tree.

Yeah, right.

I walked around the tree for some privacy, the leash pulling on my collar as I squatted.

I tried to make the experience as unpleasant as possible for her. In time, she allowed me to use the downstairs toilet, when she remembered.

This is what really got to me:

Not only was I enslaved.

But I was sold to an 80-IQ moron.

Who didn't actually have a need for a slave at all. I did, at most, two-hours of work a day... and that was really-really stretching it, as well as pretending that the house was actually dirty. Which meant that I was only taken out of solitary-confinement for, at most, two-hours a day.

And, she had me doing under-skilled work. I could have done whatever database-work she was doing on her computer. But all I did was dust.

I could have taught her almost anything, and I could have learned her language. But all I ever got from her were grunts, as if I would never be able to learn her language. Near the end of my stay, she once-or-twice said something like "*Eigen dune*" to me, with an implied meaning of "*Up there*", to indicate that I missed some cleaning.

For the most part, I was a bread-and-cheese fed electric duster, gradually wasting-away to bones and tattered skin. The

moronic-bitch never got any of my hints that I was starving to death. Whenever I opened the refrigerator for more food, she pushed the door shut with her long iron pry-bar. If I had persisted, the pry-bar would have hit my head.

Escape

Escape was impossible.

I didn't know much about implants and tracking, but I knew enough to know that no-matter where I went on the planet, Hominid slave-catchers would be able to fly a helicopter directly to my location.

And even if they couldn't, I'd eventually come-across civilization, where I would be caught.

And even if I stayed hidden, I'd need to eat more than the leaves on the trees. At best, I could only catch medium-sized mammals. Perhaps squirrels with a trap, which I didn't know how to build. The only thing I knew about hunting was from an hour-long documentary filmed with a suave Cheetah-man action-presenter. He tried to catch a springbok with his bare hands. It didn't work. Neither did a stick-club work. He ended up in hospital before he got to try-out his makeshift bow.

I didn't even consider that I'd need to somehow find water.

As far as schmoozing the battle-axe, that's not something that Cheetahs do, or even think about, or even know that other races do.

The psychology-lessons I had in high-school were mostly Cheetah psychology, how to tell if a friend was depressed, how

male psychology differed from female psychology, and what to do in the event of combat stress. 80 IQ Hominid women exhibited behaviours off the Cheetah psychology-scale.

Cheetahs don't naturally manipulate other people. I might have been able to manipulate an 80-IQ Cheetah. I had no clue how to manipulate the Hominid woman.

The woman tortured me daily. Oddly, she didn't seem to intend to torture me. She just did-so inadvertently, through neglect and fear. Even 60-IQ Cheetahs fed their children regularly.

After escaping from Azruck, I have since learned that her treatment of me was slightly-worse than normal – In that, the complete-lack of nutritious food was much worse, so was the all-day solitary-confinement in her attic prison. She never had me mated. Nor did she ever beat me. Most people experience(d) a bit of everything.

The husband-neighbour was much-more empathic. I perhaps could have found a way to move in with them. But when I heard what they did to Lilly, I wasn't so keen. (See below.)

Lilly

Three weeks after I was delivered to the battle-axe's house, and after I finished my unnecessary cleaning for the day, the neighbour-husband stopped by.

He knocked on the front door, the first time anyone knocked on the obese-woman's front-door while I was out of my cupboard. I thought about answering the door like a proper servant; it

certainly would prove more-interesting than re-dusting the same furniture every day.

“Ch,” she said to me, and motioned for me to walk towards her.

The woman grabbed hold of my leash.

Pathetic.

The door didn't wait to be opened. The neighbour-man opened the door.

“Blah blah,” he announced.

“Blah blah blah,” she said back.

After a few sentences between them, the battle-axe handed my leash to the balding man.

He took it with a worried look on his face. The man led me to the closed front-door, opened it, and collar-led me out. Then he stepped behind me, and closed the door.

The husband-neighbour led me down the woman's walkway, walking to the left, and just in front of me. The battle-axe always walked in front, or behind with a poker.

When we got to the low picket-fence gate, the man stepped forward, opened the gate, let me through, and closed it.

Crossing the street, the man walked beside me.

I was politely led in an arc around his house to his backyard, a tree-shaded patch of grass. If I had known anything about non-city-life, I would have realized that the neighbour's property was lower, and sloped down to a stream. Denser and more-lush trees would have clued me in.

Sitting on an old wood-chopping stump, was a Goat-evolved woman.

What was the neighbour-man up to?

A stump sat opposite her.

I was prompted to sit-down on the opposite stump, and I did. So far, this hadn't been an unpleasant experience. Other than the issue of the leash, the man treated me like a person.

I thought too soon... The man ruined the moment when he tied my leash to the nearby remnants of a wooden cattle/horse fence.

Oh well, I shouldn't have expected much.

The Goat-evolved woman who sat in front of me was naked. I still had not been allowed clothes. Nor a shower, for that matter.

She looked at me. I could tell she was very sad.

She looked at the collar around my neck, and eye-followed the leash down to the cattle fence.

She had no collar. Either her slavers were kinder, which they seemed to be, and/or she was less of a concern. Perhaps she wasn't expected to run away, or perhaps Goats were not thought to be dangerous. They had no claws, or teeth to bite.

The man walked away, and left us alone.

What was I supposed to do here?

I obviously wasn't going to clean their house. I had half-expected that.

I looked my companion up-and-down.

She also might have been delivered recently, most-likely sometime after my airport shuttle-bus arrived.

Goats are very sly, or at least she was. She was facing the house, and watched the man intently. As soon as he walked inside and closed the door, she gave a look that could kill... or at least maim sexually.

The Goat very-quietly spoke something.

I didn't understand the language.

I looked back at the house. They husband and wife were watching through the window.

Did they expect us to go on a date?

I turned back to the Goat-evolved woman, and nodded downwards, indicating that I didn't understand her.

She next spoke in a language that I did understand. It was used in one of the multiracial zones.

"How are you?" she asked.

I sly-smiled at her, but didn't speak back.

Pretending not to see my prey, I looked down, staring at the ground. She wasn't my prey, by the way. I didn't answer her question, but she understood that I understood her.

My ears twisted back to listen.

"What has been happening with you?" she asked.

I looked at her and squinted in anger, not at her, but at the Hominids. *"Fucking slavery,"* I whispered.

She looked left-and-right nervously, and behind me to ensure that we weren't being watched. *"I hate this shit-fucking place."*

The woman looked at my leash. *"Apparently, my fingers aren't capable of untying that leash,"* she continued. The venomous Goat squinted while speaking the line, her left upper-lip raised.

I prey-looked at the ground again, clandestinely glancing back. Only the husband was watching. Perhaps he wanted to make sure I wasn't going to eat his Goat slave.

I wished telepathy worked.

"Did you get an emergency call out?" I whisper-asked.

I received a right eye-squint from the Goat woman. She was young, about my age. *"I think so."*

Grimace on my part. My emergency telepathy call-out had only met with silence.

“What am I supposed to do here with you?” Maybe the Goat-woman knew what was up.

“I don’t know,” a sly look to see how much we were being observed. *“I was led out here half-an-hour ago, and seated. I thought you were going to be a male for me. Some sort of courtship”*

Why would I be a male?

She continued. *“I only got in last week.”*

Her lower-lip lowered in rage. *“Fuck. I hope my parents can ransom me.”*

I hadn’t thought of that. I wouldn’t be ransomed. My older sister didn’t have the money.

Me, *“Where are we?”*

A short snort from the Goat-woman. *“Hell if I know. Bum-fuck Hominid-ville.”*

“I hope I’m not supposed to mate with you,” I joked.

A worried-look appeared on her face. *“They have a book on the table with photographs of male Goat-evolved men.”*

Her look became distinctly violent.

My eyes closed slowly.

Sigh.

I waited for her to say something.

She didn’t speak for about five minutes.

“I think we’re supposed to be friends. Herbivores and carnivores work well together, don’t they?” She quickly exhaled in disgust. *“Yeah, well, we can at least not be antagonistic.”*

Something like a smile crept onto her face.

Cheetahs don’t exactly befriend people. They do, and they don’t. For the most part, Cheetah socialization involves selecting a recreation, such as watching a video. They travel to the recreation

site, and look-around for someone-else who happens to be there. If anyone non-abhorrent is present, they interact with them in a friendly manner. When a Cheetah bores of the recreation, they leave, usually without any of the other participating Cheetahs being alerted, or even noticing that they have left.

Did I want to play-along with this friendship business?

Not really.

Cheetahs do make friends, but only a few, and only very gradually. My half-sister was my friend.

Cheetahs certainly can't be forced into friendship. And certainly not by a Hominid slaver.

An acquaintanceship was convenient though. I did appreciate the venue. It was certainly nicer than a closet.

The Goat-evolved woman obviously felt that befriending someone wasn't a bad idea. I didn't answer back. I wouldn't try to be friends. But I would be mercenary about being sociable, so that I could stay at the venue. And there certainly wasn't anything objectionable about the Goat-woman.

"My name is Lilly, by the way," she said.

I used a pseudonym, *"My name is Shinzah."* *"Shinzah"* meant *"Cheetah"*, and was also the name of a dashing cartoon-character in one of the children's television-series I had watched when I was an early-teen.

The beginning of the war

Locked in my attic triangle, I could hear that the television had been watched until late into the night, volume blaring. I heard recordings of ambulance-sirens every fifteen minutes, along with televised speech that I couldn't understand. The audio occasionally included panicked yells, something I had never heard on the woman's television. Her television shows were always staid talk-shows.

Sometime in the late night, the television was turned off.

The next morning, the television was once-again on, and loud. An occasional explosion and shattering glass, as well as crying, could be heard.

I had never heard the television stay on for more than half an hour. And when the television was on, only talk-shows played on it.

This sounded like news.

Did they actually get news on this planet?

The battle-axe was very-speedy when getting me out of the cupboard. And she was irate. She scrambled down the steps way ahead of me. I took my time walking down the stairs.

What had happened?

Instead of her working in her den with her computer, the woman had moved her computer-terminal and telepathy-headset into her television room. There, she sat on her cranberry armchair. The television was blaring.

To my eyes, the house was exceptionally dirty that morning, particularly in the television room, and any parts of the rooms that could see the television room.

The woman didn't notice me. She was oblivious to all but her television and terminal. If I had thought about it, I could have opened the refrigerator and grabbed some meat.

The first video-clip I saw was of a Hominid woman-reporter – she held a microphone in front of her – standing in front of a very-large detonation-field (clearing made by a detonation). The nearest surviving structures were steel warehouses two-hundred meters distant.

Then there was a flash of light.

And then clips of an after-scene, from another camera.

The detonation-field might have been larger. The woman-reporter wasn't to be seen again, until the video-clip prior to her demise was replayed half-an-hour later. She may have been heat-vaporized.

The woman-reporter might have once been famous, she received so much attention.

Video of the nuclear detonation that created the detonation-field was shown from different locations in the city. It was a brilliant white, not an efficient nuke, nor a daisy-nuke. The television didn't show a kiloton number, but the denotation may have been ten kilotons, perhaps one-hundred.

I cleaned even-more very-slowly.

This was good news.

Clips were shown of us – not Cheetahs – being interrogated. We had bloody mouths and swollen eyes. A Tiger-evolved person was shown looking distinctly beaten-up.

You never want to hope for war, but I detested the Hominids. The thought of rescue-by-war was inviting.

The attack was on the planet of Lilac, I would later find out. I had briefly been on Lilac a month before. The nuclear detonation

had occurred during an “Al Ari” rescue of enslaved “animal”-people from a warehouse. The warehouse and all of the ones surrounding it had been destroyed by the detonation.

The Hominid media blamed the Al Ari for the detonation, though the Al Ari didn’t set-off the nukes. Hominid yahoo-soldiers in a battleship above overreacted to the “animal” rescue, and decided to 100%-definitely blow-up all of the “animal” spaceplanes, pilots, and Al-Ari rescuers. Half of the Al Ari fleet was destroyed that millisecond. The detonation-field was the size of an entire city block, and the destruction covered nine.

The Hominid media and governments blamed the Al Ari. All of us enslaved-people, undoubtedly, were now suspected of belonging to the Al Ari. The battle-axe looked at me with new suspicion, not-only worried that I would run away or bite her, but that I might stab, shoot, or detonate her.

Lilly

Never piss-off a Goat-evolved person. They can pretend to be docile and subservient while they plan their revenge. Cheetahs merely get surly.

The neighbour-husband wasn’t a bad guy, especially in the grand scheme of things.

His wife was a follower.

Neither were as bad as the battle-axe. I have since been told that Azcruk, where I was kept enslaved, was worse than 80% of the Hominid planets, as far as slavery and slave-treatment goes. I’d hate to see the other 20%.

A week after I met her, Lilly had been “bred” with a Goat-evolved male whose fur had nice coloration. The neighbour-wife had chosen Lilly’s “husband” (the neighbour-wife’s word) specifically because of his brown patches on white. Lilly was merely white.

Lilly was distraught. That was visually-obvious to me, and it must have also been evident to the neighbour-husband. I could also smell Lilly’s Goat stress-odour.

The neighbour-husband regularly rescued me from solitary confinement, taking me to his backyard for visits with Lilly every day or two. I enjoyed the visits. Lilly absolutely required them.

During our visits, I told Lilly a little about myself. I trusted her, but I didn’t trust that spying-Hominids weren’t telepathically eavesdropping on us.

Lilly talked about her past.

Crap, that made me sad. I had a past also. My past was suspended at the time. It is now gone.

I listened like a friend should.

Lilly had travelled away from her planet to hide from the war. Her family must have been more-observant than mine. I didn’t even know that a war was looming. On second thought, maybe my half-sister knew; maybe that’s why she encouraged me to leave the planet.

Lilly and her brother had been flown to a summer-camp planet, where they could spend half-a-year to a year hiding out. Summer-camp planets were worthless as real-estate; the Hominids were unlikely to invade.

They did invade.

And they took Lilly, her brother, and all her summer-camp friends as hostages... to be used temporarily and/or permanently

as slaves and breeders. No-one had expected the Hominids to take hostages. People sent their teenage-children to summer-camps so they wouldn't be killed in the expected urban bombings.

Lilly's brother had been separated from her when they were led into the spaceplane. He was directed left into the male compartment of the Hominid cargo-become-slaver ship. Female Goat-people were directed right.

Lilly hadn't seen her brother since. She half-hoped she would be "introduced" to her brother for breeding purposes, so she could at least see him.

Lilly

A month later, Lilly was bred-raped again.

Her Hominid "family" (their word) watched, just to make sure that insertion occurred.

The first time that Lilly was bred-raped, the forced-together couple didn't know if they were being watched. Lilly and her unwilling concubine whispered to one another. If he were caught not inserting, he would be punished-tortured, and Lilly would eventually be force-inserted. So Lilly told him he could insert, although the anonymous male-teenager tried to insert late.

Because Lilly didn't get pregnant after the first session, the pair was openly watched for their second nuptials. The neighbour-woman stood in the room, coolly observing. The husband found that duty distasteful-enough that he weaselled out.

It was about then in Lilly's retelling, on that particular day, that I was rushed-back to "my" house.

More nukes

The television was on once-again, a month and a half after the first bombings.

This time, the battle-axe was so enraged by the news, that she had lugged the heavy tube-television into her computer-room. It sat on her coffee table, which had been pushed against the wall. She had also rotated her desk, so she could watch the news-broadcast while working.

When the man pushed me through the front door – he didn't dare stay to say *"Hello"* – the obese-woman was violently watching the television. She clacked-in database entries with vengeance, as if her keystrokes would smite her enemies.

She made me sit down on her sofa, and watch the news, with the implication that the news-event was all my fault. I should be contrite and learn from the lesson.

The Hominid planet, Lilac, had just been hit by ten nukes.

And they were larger than the previous ones, which had only destroyed a few city blocks.

I put-off thinking about Lilly's breeding-rape.

The attacks came during the day. Most of the nuke-flashes were visually-diminished by the day's sunlight. The brilliant light-and-particle flash from each detonation implied that heat-nukes were used. Efficient nukes mostly-produced a concussion, with little light or particle dispersion.

One unfortunate city had been experiencing overcast-skies with rain. Its nuclear-demise was all-the-more spectacular because

of the thick clouds overhead. A weather-cam videoed destruction of the city centre and surrounding suburbs. The same image was repeatedly broadcast over the next few weeks.

Television reporters were visibly scrambling to extract information from anyone, something you're familiar with from Earth's experience on 9/11. Multiply that by 100-million people. Those were the casualty-figure at the time. But ten city-sized nuclear detonations couldn't have killed 100-million people. Either the figures were inflated by a factor of ten, or the number of cities hit was deflated by a factor of ten.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/9/11>)

All television-experts instantly blamed the Al Ari, an antislavery "animal"-people rescue-organization that had been blamed for the first bombings. Fewer battered alleged-Al-Ari "animal"-people were shown on television this time. Some battered Simians were shown though.

The hysteria continued for weeks on Azcruk. If the Hominids on Azcruk had been flag wavers, they would have all gone out and purchased flags to hang in front of their houses.

My telepathy had been disabled for the entire time I was on Azcruk. Two days after the event, I began receiving telepathic thumps about preparing for a nuclear holocaust. People in the post-9/11 United States received similar, but less-perceptible telepathic panics.

The community-wide Hominid telepathic signals encouraged me (and all of the Hominids) to prepare for imminent nuclear strikes. Our bomb-shelters had to be readied. We needed to conserve food, particularly tinned food. Anything might happen. The war was finally upon us. *Halleluiah!* – Literally. I do not joke.

The battle-bitch was in a telepathy-induced furore for weeks; she worked at her database-entry all-hours of the day. So did her neighbour-wife, also employed in the same line of work, I learned from Lilly. The neighbour-husband stayed away from both Hominid women. He walked about the house very quietly, and did all of his assigned chores without grumbling.

History

The Al Ari was NOT responsible for the second set of attacks either. Those attacks were from a Simian nation, as well as an Iguanodon-evolved nation occupied by the Lilac military. In the coming months, the Iguanodon-people were massacred to the point of genocide. The Simian planet was occupied. And the Al Ari were publicly blamed, and hunted down wherever they went.

Nukings occurred on the night-side of the planet also, though they were not shown on the television.

The Al-Ari warehouse-rescue detonations were from missiles fired by a non-Lilac Hominid military, who took the opportunity to decisively strike the Al Ari. Televised lies blamed the Al Ari for the bombings.

The Lilac-military knew that the Al Ari weren't at fault. They suspected that the Iguanodon-evolved nation and the Simian nation had launched the attack. The two non-Hominid planets/nations already had Lilac military on them. Hominid military-investigators found evidence that both occupied nations had been colluding to produce nuclear weapons, potentially to attack Lilac. It was more complicated than this, but a series of

heavy-handed actions by the Lilac (and other) Hominids led to the bombings of Lilac by the Iguanodon-evolved people and the Simians.

Slave-rescue begets a nine-block-sized detonation-field, which causes an investigation of occupied nations, which augments tensions, leading to a planet-wide nuclear strike, the genocide/occupation of the Iguanodon-evolved people, and the occupation of the Simians. This causality chain led the *Milky-Way Galaxy* to become one of the first galaxies to experience the war.

In July 2009, the Saurians and the Greys (and others) tried to rescue-abduct me (Mike) and several other contactees. Our attempted rescue was encouraged by the apparent arming-for-war of the Hominids in the *Andromeda Galaxy*. Rescue-abductions would be very-difficult once the war had begun.

The Saurian and Grey (and others) rescue spaceplanes were surprise-attacked by much-higher-technology weapons than had previously been used by the Hominids in the *Milky-Way Galaxy*, and in neighbouring galaxies. The high-tech attacks amounted to several-thousand points added to a million-point total, which caused the Saurians to further-investigate and prod the Hominid “*We All*” Empire in the *Andromeda Galaxy*.

Saurian military investigation/incursion missions flown into the “*We All*” Empire were attacked. Hundreds-of-thousands of new points were added to the million-point total. The “*We All*” Empire was preparing for war. The *Andromeda-Galaxy* Saurians encouraged the *Andromeda-Galaxy* war. The “*We All*” Empire was destroyed within a year.

When the “*We All*” Empire was proven to be preparing for war, the Iguanodon-nation was alerted. The *Milky-Way-Galaxy* Hominids were also suspected of belligerency. The Iguanodon-

nation began augmenting their nuclear arsenal. This was detected by Lilac, and led to heavy-handed measures from the *Milky-Way-Galaxy* Hominids, which resulted in the bombings of Lilac.

All of the hostage-and-slave taking by Hominids in 2009-2010, of which Lilly was a victim, led to retaliation in *The Six [Hominid] Kingdoms*, fifteen to one-hundred galaxies distant. The retaliation-attacks for hostage-taking, led to non-Hominid military incursions into *The Six Kingdoms*. The incursions exposed hidden very-high-tech planet-destroying weapons. This caused non-Hominid high-tech nations, who were 98%-likely targets of the planet-destroying weapons, to *Pearl-Harbour*-like attack the parked planet-destroyers. *The Six Kingdoms* were brought into the war.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pearl_Harbor_attack

The abduction-rescues on Earth-Sol were an unintended consequence of preliminary investigations into another “disclosure” attempt on Earth-Sol. Barack Obama’s election as United States president was an encouraging political development that improved the odds of “disclosure”. A “disclosure” initiative in 2001 was aborted because of the 9/11 attacks, and their aftermath. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_obama, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/9/11_attacks)

Lilly

I saw Lilly less-often over the next few weeks. With Al Ari sleeper-cells and sympathisers everywhere, I was no-longer trusted to cross the street. Any of us could be a terrorist. Cat-evolved people, especially, were suspect. Many Al-Ari leaders were Cat-evolved... Four-legged Tiger-evolved. To a Hominid, two-legged Cheetahs are practically the same thing.

Lilly was “bred” several-times more. She was being impregnated, of course, because any children Lilly would have-had, would be sold for a few-thousand dollars after they were weaned.

Her hate was palpable.

She informed me that I was also to be raped, as soon as a male Cat was found. Moronic Hominids, I thought. Cheetahs aren't Cats. At least I wouldn't get pregnant.

Lilly wasn't sure if she was pregnant or not. Since Lilly was malnourished, her foetus wouldn't grow as quickly, nor would he/she grow to full size. Lilly's pregnancy wouldn't be visible for some months.

Lilly

On a different occasion, Lilly mentioned that her Hominid “family” (their word, not hers) had driven her a kilometre down the road to a dinner party, several times. She wasn’t given any food, but she had met more of us there. One was a Coyote-evolved woman (not Malamute as I wrote earlier), one Weasel-evolved, and another Rabbit-evolved. “*Your [battle-axe] master*”, she said cynically, had been there also. I had been locked in my cupboard while she was gone.

Lilly

Lilly mentioned that she had been studying aerospace engineering. Her studies were postponed by her run-and-hide holiday. Her brother was studying to be an architect.

I kept my own past quiet.

Lilly

The next week, I gave into friendliness and ignored my paranoia about being telepathically listened-to. I described to Lilly what I had been doing with the Syn-Cheetahs.

I acutely perceived that Lilly craved our time-together talking. Being a Cheetah, I wasn’t so emotionally-attached to Lilly that I

would call her a friend, more of an acquaintance. Unfortunately, this sounds harsh to non-Cheetahs. *“Friendship”* in Cheetahs is an unusual and strong emotional-attachment. Cheetahs rarely have more than one “friend”, and only a handful of “acquaintances”. Everyone-else is merely everyone else.

The end of the world

I have to admit, the end of the world is quite pretty.

One morning, the battle-bitch didn't unlock my cupboard-prison-cell to let me out.

I stayed there all day.

The birds were awfully quiet that day, though. I didn't notice this until it was later pointed-out to me.

When would she let me out?

I spent at least two full days locked away, perhaps three.

Then I heard some non-shoed footfalls climb the staircase.

There was whispering in the galactic-standard language.

The sewing-machine mini-desk that blocked my door was pushed aside.

The lock was unlocked. Unbeknownst to me, the keys were daily left on the mini-desk. Convenient, but not terribly clever.

The door opened.

A Coyote-person stared in, and smiled.

Where was the battle-bitch?

“She's not here.”

Telepathy worked!

“Yes, their blockers have been turned off. Telepathy only has a range of a few meters though.”

“Cool,” I thought.

A weasel-evolved person poked his head in.

“Come on out. Everyone [the Hominids] is hiding.”

Had we been rescued by an invasion force?

“Not quite. You have to see this to believe it.”

The house was dark...

... but slightly blue.

I followed the two down the stairs, and then outside, where I met Lilly and a Rabbit-evolved teenager.

Lilly was happy to see me. She hugged me.

And then she pointed up.

The sky was navy blue.

There was no sun.

There were no stars.

There might have been very-large spherical “blobs” that were slightly luminescent. *Vincent Van Gogh’s, “The Starry Night”* could have been painted that ~~night~~ day.

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The Starry Night](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Starry_Night),
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vincent van Gogh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vincent_van_Gogh))



What the fuck had happened?

"We think they were attacked. 😊"

"We don't know," telepathed someone else.

"They're all hiding in their fallout shelters."

The five of us spent the day, if you could call it a day, wandering around the forest and the creek behind Lilly's house.

How could someone hide the sun?

How could they do that to the sky?

What really happened was that Azcruk was time-dunked by the Hominid military. We only spent six days under *"The Starry Sky"*. Three-quarters of a year passed in the rest of the world.

Television had warned the Azcruk Hominids what would happen. Enough of them had fallout shelters, where they "hid" from the devastating cosmic-rays experienced by people on time-

dunked planets. Their fallout shelters weren't deep enough, but the Azcruk Hominids didn't know this. They were only 10% less-irradiated than the five of us were.

According to the Coyote-woman, the Hominids were told that their planet would emerge from the time-dunk after a few weeks, but fifty-years later to everyone else. The war would be over. The Hominids would have valiantly won the war. And there would be *"milk and honey"* for all – their words.

Azcruk was only under for three-quarters of a year. The planet and its population was time-dunked as an trial, to test-out the planet-dunking process. Lilac, the planet of Azcruk's parent-nation, was time-dunked a few months later, also for three-quarters of a year.

"You're my friend, Shinzah"

We slept outside, near the creek, as far away from the Hominid houses as possible, just in case they came-out of their shelters.

I finally got to bathe myself, after three months. Lilly had been allowed to bathe regularly, but she also bathed herself when I did, getting some shampoo from the house. She propped-up her belly with her hand as she bathed. Was she pregnant?

After the others had also bathed and dried-off, we wandered-about, talked, and soaked-in our temporary freedom.

And then we slept.

After three days of “*Starry Night*” freedom, we nearly had a morning. A sun was barely visible in the sky, yellow-white in colour. Azcruk’s sun had been yellow. The new sun was VERY large.

During a morning-long discussion, we concluded that the planet we were on had been moved. The Rabbit-evolved teenager had read of such a thing in a science-fiction story.

Once the move was complete, the Hominids would emerge from their bomb shelters.

We would be in trouble.

They would whip-us (or something similar) for running away.

They would know we were in “cahoots”, and we’d never see one-another again. Everyone would be locked-up in solitary confinement like me... Thanks guys.

And we’d miss our chance to escape.

We discussed running further into the hilly lightly-forested savannah. The herbivores among-us could survive on grass, herbs, and leaves... barely. The foliage wasn’t very nutritious. The three of us carnivores would die without meat, and with only grass-and-leaves.

And we would be tracked-down by slave-catchers within weeks.

What were we going to do?

When the sun set a few hours later, which made for a very-short day, I fell asleep.

I think the others stayed awake.

When I woke up, Lilly stood in front of me.

“*You’re my friend, Shinzah,*” she spoke.

That phrase got me nervous. Cheetahs were very-slow to befriend.

Lilly held out a long triangular knife.

"I want you to kill me."

I squinted. What was up?

"I am serious. I want to die. I cannot exist here."

I didn't want to become a murderer.

"Shinzah, I am earnestly serious. You're the best friend I have here."

She continued. *"Please kill me."*

"Can't you kill yourself?" I stated. *"I don't want to become a murderer."* I selfishly briefly thought-about what the Hominids would do to me if they caught me having suicide-killed Lilly. They would know. They would sick a telepath on us to see who had killed her. I would be arrested for murder, imprisoned, and most-likely tortured.

"I CAN'T hold the knife myself, and stab myself," Lilly pleaded.

That was certainly true. Lilly's hands required a different knife-handle.

"Please kill me, friend."

And then it got worse.

The Coyote-woman approached.

"I stole the knife from my family. I went back last night, and got it. They weren't very-good at hiding it."

Theft. The Hominids would see borrowing a knife as theft.

The Coyote-woman continued. *"We all want to die. We don't know about you, but we all want to die."*

My muscles tensed with apprehension.

"Both Lilly and Casey [the Rabbit-teenager] FEEL that committing suicide is the best way for us to get off Azcruk." The Coyote-woman was trying to convince me.

Suicide was never a good option. You never knew what would happen after you killed yourself.

“The whispers seem to be talking to them, and giving them permission,” she added. The Coyote-woman was obviously the mature-leader of the group.

“You have the most-appropriate hands for grasping the knife.”

The Coyote-woman’s speech slowed with emphasis, and she selected her words carefully: *“After you kill Lilly...”* She restarted her sentence. *“After you have helped Lilly die, you can kill all of us.”*

“Let me rephrase that. After you help Lilly die, you can help us die in the same way.”

I didn’t like the sound of this at all. It chilled me to the bone.

“We know you don’t like it.” The Coyote-woman was reading my mind, of course.

“Lilly cannot stab herself with her hooves and that knife.”

“Merry [the weasel] cannot grasp the knife either.”

“Casey [the Rabbit teenager] doesn’t have what is necessary to kill herself. She definitely doesn’t have the will-strength to kill us.”

I didn’t get a chance to think of a response.

“You are more mature than they are,” was telepathically whispered to me by the Coyote-woman.

“I can stab myself in the heart, but it’ll be difficult. My hands can barely hold the knife. It is even-more difficult for me to hold it in front of me and to stab myself. I have tested this.”

Crap. I really didn’t like the sound of this plan.

“We might be able to simultaneously stab one-another last.”

The Coyote-woman suggested this to make my own self-suicide easier. I would have to kill myself after suicide-killing them, or the Azcruk police would go after me.

“I have a smaller knife that I can hold. I can stab you in the back as you stab me in my back.”

For all I knew, stabbing each other might just work.

But I didn't want to do it.

"Please," begged Lilly. *"I can't survive here."*

"No one will kill me, unless they themselves die," she continued. *"They don't want the Hominids charging them with murder and torturing them forever."*

My eyes closed slowly.

"The spirits here tell me that we'll be alright," pleaded Lilly.

Fuck. I didn't like the idea.

The mature Coyote-woman stepped in. *"You don't have to do anything right now. You can think about it for an hour."*

Fuck.

I sat down against a tree, by the creek.

As odd as it sounds, I fell asleep.

Murder suicide

When I awoke an hour later, it was already high-noon. The days were extremely short. The new sun loomed larger in the sky. We could all be fried by the overly-close sun in a few days if we passed near it, evaporated if we flew into it.

Lilly approached alone.

"Will you help me?"

Despite my slavery living-conditions, I hadn't been hypothesizing or planning for my own suicide. If I killed the four of them, I would have to kill myself also.

"Yes," I answered with regret.

Ten minutes later, everyone gathered.

I stood, my back against a tree.

The sun was overbearing, at least ten-times as large as the sun appears on Earth-Sol.

Lilly approached me.

"How should we do this?" she asked.

"I need to stab you in the heart," I answered. That was according to the "common knowledge" I had learned from television stories and documentaries, and what little I remembered from organ biology.

Lilly held up her arms, to stretch-out and expose her rib-cage. I could see individual rib-lines.

The knife, a long pointed kitchen knife, was already in my right hand. I began to lift the knife.

Crap.

I hated this.

How the hell was I going to stab her? Especially from the front. It would be more-difficult to hit her heart from the front. Her sternum provided protection.

Well, that was an excuse to avoid looking into her eyes as she died.

"Try turning around," I requested glumly.

Lilly lowered her arms, and turned around, her back to me.

"Okay," she verified when she had spun around.

God, I hated this.

But what alternatives were there?

With my left hand, I grasped Lilly's left shoulder, to steady her. I had never stabbed anyone before. I had never-even seen it done on a television movie.

Theoretically, according to the movies, if I stabbed Lilly in her heart, she would bleed to death. My remembered high-school knowledge of anatomy led me to believe that she might also have a major heart attack.

I didn't even know where her heart was.

I felt my own heavy-beating heart to find its location.

From there, I gauged where her heart was.

"Are you sure?" I asked again.

"Yes," replied Lilly.

The other three stood in an arc in front of Lilly, watching her.

Lilly was trembling. She smelled of stress.

I placed the point of the knife against her back.

Her back-skin flinched upwards.

I didn't want to do this.

Crap.

I hate this shit.

I don't ever want to remember it.

Fuck.

She would be feeling the knife point.

"How will we know if you're all right?" I asked, stalling, not for time. Just stalling.

"I have been told by the whispers that I will be able to get word to you."

All of my muscles tensed. I would soon be exuding stress-smell.

I pushed the knife in harder, perhaps half a centimetre.

Lilly gasped a bit. She may have thought I had already stabbed her.

I really didn't want to do this. "Are you absolutely sure?"

"Yes."

Lilly leaned back a bit to indicate her readiness.

"Once more. Do you want me to kill you?"

"Uh huh. Yes I do, Shinzah." My name wasn't really Shinzah, but I wasn't about to tell Lilly that at that point.

I stabbed.

And I cried.

And I screamed silently.

Lilly stood erect. The knife was plunged all of the way into her back, up to the hilt.

From the startled looks of her three friends, it must have been poking through the other side.

What would happen next?

Shouldn't Lilly die immediately?

I waited.

She wasn't dead.

Was she in pain?

"A little," Lilly answered. She had read my mind. Obviously, Goats are good liars.

How long should I wait?

I held Lilly steady with my left hand, the knife still embedded by my right.

Nothing happened.

This was a bit of an anticlimax, I thought.

"Anticlimax? Hmm. The knife-point sticking out of Lilly's chest certainly wasn't typical." One of the others must have telepathed this impression.

Lilly, *"I feel faint."*

The stabbing hadn't worked.

"You should be dead by now," I said.

"Maybe you missed her heart," spoke the Coyote-woman.

Fuck.

I felt awful. I had fucked-up, and now Lilly was in pain.

"It doesn't hurt that much," said Lilly.

What if I couldn't successfully kill Lilly? She'd have permanent organ-failure of one sort or another.

Shit.

"Should I stab you in another place?" I asked.

"Yes," answered Lilly.

"Please, do it," she added, with some urgency.

"I am going to pull-out the knife," I told her verbally. *"I'll see how much blood comes out. You might just bleed to death from here."*

I pulled-out the knife.

It had a sticky-goo of blood on it.

Very-little blood trickled out of the five-centimetre gash in her back.

I waited twenty seconds to see if more blood flowed out.

"Are you anymore faint?"

"Maybe," said Lilly.

Time to stab somewhere else.

I moved the knife elsewhere (I won't write where), and poked it into her.

"I'm sorry for the pain," I said.

Fuck. I was crying.

I was panicked also.

I don't remember much.

I thrust the knife into her again, hoping she wouldn't feel any more pain.

Fuck! Crap! I hate this memory.

Lilly lasted maybe, five seconds, and then fell down. My left hand couldn't hold onto her. Her body slid-off my knife.

Panic.

"She's dead," came someone's shocked telepathic-impression.

Was she alive?

I still didn't see much blood coming out of the wound. Horror films led me to expected gushes of blood.

Everyone stared at me as if I was a murderer... or so I thought.

I was a murder, in a way.

But what do you do?

We all rushed to Lilly, and turned her onto her back.

Her eyes were still open.

"Is she breathing?"

We watched her rib-cage for a minute.

"No, I don't think so." She might have been breathing shallowly.

"What about a pulse?"

I didn't know where to feel for a pulse.

The Rabbit-teenager felt around Lilly. First her wrist, and then her neck veins.

A happy and sad emotion came from the Rabbit-teenager.

"She's dead." The teenager side-telepathed that she had taken a few first-aid courses.

And then she uncontrollably broadcast a telepathic-impression that she had been with someone when they died from a trauma wound.

And then the Rabbit-teenager began to tremble. She was now scared shitless.

"How do we know if she's all-right? What will happen to her soul?" I asked.

“Just wait a few minutes,” answered the Coyote-woman, now taking control.

We all stared at Lilly’s body.

I thought about wiping-off the knife, but where?

I had no cloth.

I didn’t want to wipe it off on Lilly either.

What a fucking-awkward question: *“Does anyone have any clothes I can use to wipe-off this knife?”* I asked.

The Weasel-person took-off his shirt, and handed it to me.

I wiped-off the knife.

The Rabbit-teenager looked transfixed for a moment, and then meekly said, *“Lilly is alright. I think. They have her soul.”*

She then turned towards the Weasel-person and said, *“Merry, you’re next.”*

Thinking back, that sounds like an odd pronouncement. The Rabbit-teenager should have volunteered to be next if she were so certain.

Merry didn’t hesitate much.

He didn’t want to die beside the same tree that Lilly had, though. Flies were already buzzing around the blood seeping out of Lilly’s back.

Merry walked me over to another tree.

He positioned me so my back was against the tree.

He then stood in front of me, and turned around.

The Rabbit-teenager and the Coyote-woman stood close to Merry’s front. They propped him up from their side, each holding onto one of Merry’s armpits.

I grabbed Merry’s left shoulder with my hand.

God-damn-it, I already had a routine!

I poked the knife into Merry’s back.

“Are you sure you want to be stabbed?” I asked.

Merry actually stepped-back into the knife. My arm was pushed back slightly.

I got his message.

“Sure?”

“Yes. I think it’s better to die.” Merry noticed his uncertain statement. *“Go for it. Stab me. I want to die.”*

He turned his head slightly to the right to get a glimpse of me, emphasizing the point.

I plunged the knife into Merry’s heart.

He went down instantly.

The three of us couldn’t hold him up.

By this time, we were macabrely and unfortunately, “experts”.

We checked Merry’s breathing.

Nothing.

The Rabbit-woman checked Merry’s pulse, and neck vein.

Nothing.

I watched her work, since most-likely, the Rabbit-woman would be next. I would have to check for a pulse.

Casey telepathically-heard that thought, and looked up at me. Her telepathic-impression was kind-of, *“I should expect that,”* combined with, *“It is my turn, isn’t it. I have to be killed before you two.”*

Casey was SHAKING.

Casey was absolutely terrified.

Casey began brooding on the *“Rabbit-woman would be next”* thought.

“You don’t have to do this,” I said.

“No, I want to, and I’m supposed to,” she answered.

"It's the only way off this planet. If we don't get off, we are going to be caught and rounded-up when the handed-scum [Hominids] come out."

Casey continued, this time mumbling. *"And then we'll be stuck here for years more."* Pause. *"I can't live like that."*

We found another tree.

Casey wanted to die facing me.

Again, my back was to a tree.

Casey turned towards me, a head shorter.

I hated this.

Would I see the soul go out of her eyes?

"Fuck," thought Casey.

She lifted the knife-point up to her chest, and placed it between her ribs.

She got the wrong ribs. I readjusted.

Casey nodded yes, and whispered a single-syllable word.

"Sure?" I Cheetah-whispered. That whisper would normally freak-out most herbivores.

"Yeah." Pause. *"It's my turn."*

I plunged the knife into Casey.

I was crying, but I couldn't cry anymore.

I hated the fucking Hominids.

Why did they make me do this?

Why did they make us do this?

Fuck.

Casey didn't fall.

She didn't die right-away.

Her eyes glazed over, and rolled-up.

It must have been about twenty seconds.

I had fucked-up on her too.

Then she fell backwards onto Shim, the Coyote-woman. Shim caught Casey underneath her arm-pits, and gradually laid her to the ground.

Casey wasn't breathing.

I checked her pulse. I couldn't feel any, either in her arm, or her neck.

Nor could Shim, when she checked Casey.

"I don't know if she has a pulse. Should I stab her again?" I asked Shim, *"Just to make sure?"*

Shim thought. *"She looks dead,"* she said with her eyes raised to me.

"Yeah," I paused. *"I'm just worried."*

"She's dead. Leave her body."

What a fucking crappy-life.

I swore vengeance against the Hominids for making me do this.

I was livid.

Tears were long-gone.

Shim, the Coyote-woman, was not so eager to die.

Now that it was her turn, she also began to tremble.

No-one knew what would happen after you died, particularly after a suicide.

Shim found a tree that leaned slightly.

Thoughts about stabbing one-another had gone out of our minds. I had entirely forgotten about the idea. It wouldn't have worked either.

I was now thinking about my own suicide, not about how I would kill Shim.

I'd have to stab myself in the chest from the front.

Unfortunately, and morosely, Casey having me stab her from the front was practice.

Shim hugged the leaning tree. It would prop her up when she died. It was a good idea.

What the fuck was I doing, thinking that Shim's suicide-invention was a good idea?

It showed that we were perfecting the technique.

God, I hated the fucking Hominids.

Shim readjusted herself, and let me know she was ready. *"I'm ready. Stab me. I've died before."*

I positioned the knife.

"Once again. Do you really want me to stab you?"

"Yes."

I once-again stabbed.

Shim didn't collapse to the ground.

Fuck.

I hated this.

Was she still alive?

Tears welled up.

I would remember this forever.

"Shim, are you dead?" I asked.

No response.

"Shim?"

Nope.

Nothing.

Silence.

Shim had propped herself-up so-well that she wouldn't fall away from the tree, even if she had died.

I dropped the knife, and grabbed both of Shim's shoulders. She fell backwards towards me.

I deflected her falling body towards the ground... so that I wouldn't get blood all-over me. What a selfish thought.

Lying on her back, head turned, Shim's tongue rolled out the side of her open jaw.

Her eyes were closed.

I'm crying as write this.

There was no blood or puncture in Shim's chest.

She wasn't breathing.

I watched for a minute.

She still wasn't breathing.

I checked for her pulse. Hell, how would I know if she didn't have a pulse?

I couldn't feel anything.

I waited a few minutes, watching for any sign of life or breath, just to make sure she was dead.

Shim was dead.

"They're all-right," I received a clear telepath.

I cried then.

I am crying now.

It was my turn.

How was I going to commit suicide myself?

I hadn't practiced that one.

Before killing myself, I made sure everyone else was dead. I walked around to all four trees.

I nudged everyone with my foot just to make sure.

I watched each of them for at least a minute.

I couldn't bear to check their pulse.

I didn't want to leave any of them in pain.

Nor did I want to leave them to their Azcruk enslavement.

Sigh.

I wandered aimlessly a short distance.
I wiped-off my knife.
I had forgotten to wipe it off for Shim.
Oh well, I fucked that one up.
How would I kill myself?
I tried leaning against a tree.
And held the knife to my chest.
That wouldn't work.
I sat down against a tree.
I poked the knife in a few centimetres, without piercing my
heart.
It hurt, but not that badly.
I plunged the knife in.
My heart stop.
I felt it stop.
I became light-headed.
My vision failed.
I was sucked into a curling well of darkness.

For more stories

You can download more of my short stories for free from:

<http://www.disclosuree.com/Stories.pdf>