

Hyp@critical

ACT I            SCENE 1: A suburban breakfast room. HE and SHE are at the table with breakfast paraphernalia – a French press, mugs, bagels and cream cheese. HE is playing a game on his phone. SHE is doing a crossword on her tablet as they chat and nosh.

SHE:            So, Stacia said her daughter ran up a thousand dollars on her credit card bill buying digital outfits for herself to pretend to wear on Instagram. She had no clue this was happening until the bill came in.

HE:            She didn't notice all the clothes arriving.

SHE:            There were no clothes arriving. They weren't real clothes. They were virtual clothes that you buy from a designer who photoshops them onto your image for you, I guess? I don't know the details. Needless to say, little miss is grounded from mobile tech until she's thirty.

HE:            Seems extreme.

SHE:            Not to me. But it almost – almost – makes me glad we never had children.

HE:            You don't mean that.

SHE:            No. Not really. (beat) Digital clothes though. I mean I thought it was crazy when I found out people were spending real money to buy virtual outfits for their characters on Second Life. I mean... really?

HE:            It's no different than me wanting to spend money on gear for my characters in the games I play.

SHE:            And if you'll recall, I have a big problem with that, too. I think it's absurd. It's a cash grab, and I'm not sure it's healthy. I don't remember anyone charging real money to write bits of working code when our gaming consisted of MUSHes, MUXes, MUDs and MOOs.

HE:            And yet, I do remember you wanting to buy the Star Trek outfits for your SIMS from the shopping mall forums.

SHE:            Well...

HE:            Besides, there's a big difference between buying 'bits of working code' when there were literally free code repositories where you could grab everything from basic puppet controllers to multi-descers -

SHE:            (interrupting) I still remember that time El'vis's multi-descer failed to compile with a code upgrade and every time you looked at him it returned the text "El'vis just left the bathing pools. Someone get him something to wear!"

HE: (chuckling) God, we were so much younger then...

SHE: And the 'net was so much simpler...

HE: And now we're just as guilty as Stacia's kid, spending money on crew packs in our own games.

SHE: Yeah, but crew and expansions, not clothing and gear built by people outside the game and then ported in.

HE: Hypocritical, much?

SHE: Yes. Because I'm old and have my own credit cards.

HE: (after a long silence) Digital clothing though, really?

SHE: Digital clothing. Really.

END