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## Fantasia

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## Fantasia

ABBY HEUGEL

*H*uh? Leave me alone! After everything that happened yesterday, I think I deserve to sleep in. You want to get up already? I want just five minutes more. My bed is so warm and secure and... breakfast? I know, I know. You want breakfast. Just let me lay here a second more and I'll get up. Alright, fine! I'll get up now. Make sure you keep those blinds closed.

Okay, okay. Where's that coffee I bought last week? The really expensive kind that's imported from Costa Rica. Above the stove? Oh yes. Now I remember. I can't wait to brew up some of that! The smell of toasted macadamia nuts reminds me of that week in Hawaii. Remember when I went? The beach, the sun, the sand. It's

just the best coffee you'll ever have. Give me a minute to get it brewing. This coffee pot works really quickly.

Anyway, I'll start to tell you about my day yesterday while we fix food. What would you like? I forget. Are you the one who likes their eggs scrambled or sunny side up? Scrambled? No problem. I don't think there's anything better than scrambled eggs and imported coffee first thing in the morning.

Where was I? Oh yes. My day started out normal enough. I got up, decided against a shower, and settled on the couch to watch "All My Children". It's just one hour. I'm not a T.V. junkie or anything so don't give me that look. Coffee's done! Mmmmm... can you smell that? Help yourself. No, no thanks. None for me. I don't drink coffee.

Anywho, I was watching my soap. Erica Cane is really the greatest. How she had the strength to overcome almost dying six times in two months is beyond me. And how she saved those children from that burning car? I plan on going to meet Ms Erica Cane as soon as I have the time. Anyway, the phone rang. I was going to let the machine pick it up, but I thought maybe it would be important. It wasn't. It was just my boss from the store, Bob, and he was wondering where I was. Where was I? That really pissed me off. What right did he have to interrupt my morning like that? Who did he think he was? I told him I was at home watching TV and drinking coffee. He told me that this is the third time in two weeks that I haven't come in and if it happened again,

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he would fire me. Fire me? I laughed at that. Seeing that I have tons of money anyway, I told him that I quit. After all, Erica was framed for embezzlement when she worked at the modeling agency last season. She ended up winning the lottery. Anytime you work for them it just gets you in trouble.

You don't believe me? Call him yourself if you want. No, I'm serious as shit. Your eggs are done! No, I'm not having any. I'm allergic to eggs. I think some toast might be good though. I love toast with strawberry jelly, don't you? There's nothing better, except maybe macadamia nut coffee from Costa Rica. Stick a few slices of bread in the toaster and I'll keep talking.

Did you see that plane crash on the news the other day? Crazy how they think they can keep those big ol' planes up in the air like that. Well, they probably could if they weren't in control of everything. That's why I have never left this state. Nope, Ohio is good enough for me. Couldn't pay me to leave. Not that I need the money or anything.

So after I quit my job because my boss is totally unreasonable, I decided that maybe I should go to the bank and take out some money. You know the government is planning to steal all the money out of all the banks in the country don't ya? That's why I'm slowly taking out money. If you do it all at once you look suspicious. As I was walking into the bank, I saw a man in front of me who looked kinda shady. He had on some jeans and a black shirt. I was keeping a close eye on him because I figured he was one of them. Something in my head told me he was up to no good. Like Judge Mills Lane says on his television show, "Stand proud upright; never run from a fight." I had to do something.

Didn't I tell you to stick some bread in the toaster? I guess I have to do everything around here. The damn phone is ringing again, isn't it? Let it go. It can't be anything as important as this story. If I had a machine they could leave a message, but I have never owned one and never will. That's just another way for them to listen to us and know what we're doing. I'm not going to give them the satisfaction. Hold on. I have to let the cat outside a minute. She told me she has to pee real bad and I don't want another accident. When I was in China and left her here, I came home to a house full of kitty landmines. Don't want an incident like that again, that's for darn sure. It took the maid forever to clean.

Anyway, the man in the bank approaches the counter and I see him pull out a gun. I'm the only one who can really see what's going on, so I jump on his back and wrestle him to the ground. That's what Judge Mills Lane would have done. He'll be proud of me when I tell him. Before I know it though, the cops are there and on us like stink on shit, ya know? Get this. They think I was the one causing a "disturbance," as they put it so eloquently. I saved tons of people and they think that I did something wrong? I had some time to think about it while I was at the station and decided that they probably worked for the government too. That robber that I caught was smuggling money out for

them and I foiled their plan. After some doctor guy came in and gave me a few vitamins they let me go. Yeah, vitamins. I didn't want to take nothing from them, but I had to. I think it was really a tracking device. Hopefully I'll shit it out soon.

Do you like butter on your toast? What? I don't either! Weird coincidence. I was in this café in Paris once and everyone was eating these long bread loaves smothered in butter. Don't they know how bad that is for them? Oh well. I just sipped my coffee, smoked my cigarette, and let them do their thing. Brush my teeth? No, I don't really care about that kind of stuff. They only tell you its important because then you spend money on stuff like toothpaste and shampoo and whatever. I only do it enough to keep them looking good. What? Quit drilling me about personal hygiene okay? Let me finish.

After I left the police station I decided that I should go to the store to pick up a few groceries.

Don't you just love grocery shopping? Pushing that cart around everywhere and filling it with fun snacks and whatnot. I always try to buy stuff that's good for me because I think that next year I will enter that bodybuilding contest that is always on ESPN. I think I could really win. The announcer guy said it just takes hard work and I can do that. It was like he was talking directly to me! What? Well, I plan on losing a few more pounds before then. Look at you! You think you could win? Anyway, I didn't put butter on my toast did I? See, I'm already starting the diet.

Anyway, after I had loaded up my cart with eggs, some cookies ...yes, they were low fat, and some turkey I headed over to the pet department to pick up some treats for the cat. She told me she likes those salmon fish-shaped treats. If I don't get them for her she gets real mad at me. Well, as I was walking past the rows of birdcages, you know Meijer has that pet department in the back with all the rodents and stuff, when this one bird just started talking to me! No, I'm not kidding! No, not just "hello" and "Polly want a cracker". It was seriously talking to me. At first I tried to ignore it, but I kept hearing it over and over. Hearing what? Weren't you listening to me? The bird was telling me to let it free! It was stuck in that cage day after day with no escape. That didn't seem fair to me, so I opened the cage. Yup, just let it right out. What? Like you wouldn't have done the same thing?

So the dang thing is flying all over the store and soon people begin to notice that there's this bird loose. Everyone starts pointing and looking at the bird. I just smiled and kept going. As he flew over me the bird thanked me and I felt like I had really helped him out. Is someone here? Just the mailman? What do you mean just the mailman? I am expecting some very important letters you know. I write to celebrities all the time and get letters back. Julia Roberts and me are practically inseparable. She sent me this picture and had her people write me this nice letter. I understand how busy she is. I'm expecting another letter any day now. I'm just going to run and get the mail a second. Then I'll

tell you what else happened.

Bummer. She didn't write today, but look! I did get a letter from the world-famous bodybuilder Ronnie Coleman. He is so sexy. I write him all the time and once he wrote back and told me that for only \$300 he would work with me at his gym in California for two whole hours. I plan to make it out there some time next summer. He is so hot! I would love to do him. All big and strong and...and...big and strong. I love strong guys. I have a few that I'm dating right now, but nobody real serious. I don't want to tie myself down to just one, ya know? There's this one who I might just move in with. I met him in a karaoke bar and he's totally hot. I know, I know. Be careful and all that crap. What? Geez, are you the moral police or what? Now can I finish my story or are you going to keep interrupting me? Thank you.

So, from the grocery store I decided to come home and have some lunch. That usually takes a little while because I like to take my time and cut my food up into little pieces. Yup, you guessed it. A peanut butter and jelly sandwich (because I hate lunchmeat), water and some fat-free cookies. How did you know? That's right! I always have that for lunch. Change isn't always good ya know. You know me so well. Except sometimes I'll have some fruit or pretzels instead of those cookies. I am watching my weight you know. Don't roll your eyes! Where was I? Lunch? No, I just had toast for breakfast a few minutes ago. Oh! I was telling you about yesterday. Thanks.

About an hour later I decided I wanted to go get some new clothes. I'm losing so much weight that nothing fits me anymore. Can't you tell? Look at my huge bicep. So I walk into this store and see the cutest pair of jeans. They were on the cutest butt of the cutest salesman I have ever laid eyes on. He was so hot! Rrrrrrr! Huh? That's the cat noise I make at hot guys, remember? Don't interrupt. Anyway, he was totally sexy and perfect and everything but I was there to shop. I found some real cute shorts and this black skirt that just had sex written all over it. I told the lady that I would like to try them in a size 3. She gave me the bitchiest look! Women can be so jealous, you know what I mean? So I'm waiting for her in the fitting room and she finally brings me the clothes like, three hours later. No, not really three hours later but it felt like it. Quit interrupting! I try on the shorts, but they barely go up past my knees. That seemed odd to me. I shouldn't have a problem fitting into a size 3. What do you think? Never mind, I'm not done. Is Fantasia by the door? Fine. I'll let the damn cat in myself. Sometimes you're so damn lazy.

Well, I figured out that the size 3 in this store was a different size three than the ones I was used to. I can easily fit into stuff from other stores. I have this pair of shorts I got last year that are totally hot and fit perfect. I could've easily been a runway model in Paris or somewhere if I would fly on an airplane. How do I know? What does it matter? I know I could. Are you comfortable? How about we go into the living room and sit on the couch. The backs of these chairs get uncomfortable after a while. I think it's because of all the muscle in

my back. It gets...compacted or something.

Ahh. Much better, don't you think? When I get a hold of Jules, that's what I call Julia Roberts, I'm going to ask her if she wants to help me pick out some new furniture. This stuff is kinda old. Anyway, I decided to get out of those fitting rooms as soon as possible. Why? Because they watch you. No, not just the store clerks but them. They have cameras hidden in everything you know. I heard once that there was this big screen in some secret place where they constantly watched every single person in the country. That's a lot worse than watching an hour of soap operas, don't you think? It doesn't bother me that they see me naked though because maybe some hot guy is watching. Rrarrrr!

I decided that I needed a little fun so I went down the road to that bar that has all the hot guys in it. No, not the gay bar. Very funny. It is true though that all the hot guys are either married or gay! That doesn't stop me though. When you look like I do, there are no limits. What's your deal? Are you jealous or something? Sorry. Okay, I'll calm down and finish my story. I sat down and ordered a beer. The smoke was way heavy in there. I can't believe people smoke. Don't you just think it's so disgusting? I don't know how people can do it. Anyway, all these guys were checking me out and I let a couple of them buy me some drinks. There was this one though. Rrarr! He was so hot. I ended up going out to his car with him and, you know, getting some. I know, I know. You don't have to give me a lecture. I've heard it all before. Why should I listen to you? Huh? Yeah, I still carry my pepper spray with me wherever I go. Gotta be careful out there. Never know where they will be, ya know? He said he was going to call me anyway. I think we really hit it off. No, that doesn't mean I won't still see the others. Especially when Jules and me hang out or when I go to California to be with Ronnie Coleman.

Hold on. I gotta make sure those drapes are shut in the kitchen and that the back door is locked. Why do you always make me explain? You know why. You know that they could come at any time. Don't want no one peeking in my windows. Sure, he says he's the meter reader, but are we ever really sure? Nope, never can be. Glad you're finally starting to listen to me.

So, I'm walking home and it's about 10:00. Yeah, I know that's kinda late and stuff but I didn't care. I went to the convenience store right close by and decided to buy one of those scratch off tickets. Not that I needed the money or anything. It just felt like my lucky night, ya know? If Erica Cane can win the lottery, so can I. No, I got the kind that only cost a dollar. Not the five dollar ones. Anyway, there was this hot guy in there and he started talking to me. Blah blah blah. Finally he asked me if I wanted to go get a drink some time, but since I don't ever drink I had to turn him down. I was a little bummed, but I got over it when I scratched off my lottery ticket. \$10! Nope, would I lie to you? I bought a pack of cigarettes, a Miller Lite (because I'm watching my weight), and headed home.

I was almost home when I looked behind me and saw this blinking red and

green light up in the sky. It was them! I was sure of it. How did I know? How did I know? You know when something like that happens. There were only a couple other people outside, but they hadn't seen it yet. It was slowly moving across the night sky. Paper towel. We need to buy paper towel the next time we go to the store don't we. No, we don't need any more cookies in the house. Because I told you that I am trying to get all thin and stuff! Let me finish my story! I really don't care if you want cookies. Now be quiet for a minute.

Geez. Okay. So since I know that they are up in the sky right over us I start running as fast as I can back to the house. Let the phone go. Anyway, they probably knew where I was because of that tracker I swallowed at the police department. I'm almost to the door when I hear someone saying, "Ma'am, did you drop these cigarettes?" There was this kid a couple houses down who was trying to distract me by acting like I had dropped something while I was running. I told him that I've never smoked and never will and to get the hell away from my house. With that, I ran inside and slammed the door. After I made sure every door was locked and every shade was down, what? I don't know how old he was. What does it matter? How could he be trying to help me by giving me those disgusting cancer sticks? Where did Fantasia go? Here kitty kitty.

What? Oh yes. I was trying to finish when you butted in again. No, you were butting in. Anyway, I was totally exhausted. Can you even imagine? First I save everyone from the bank robber. Then they put that tracker in me. Then there was the bar and the lottery ticket. And most of all, they were flying over my house! See, they know that I'm on to them. All of this made me very tired, so I went to bed. Only I really couldn't sleep knowing that they were right outside, so Fantasia and me stayed up talking for a little bit until I got sleepier. She said that I should come up with a plan this week to try and nip this crap in the butt, or something like that. What? No, she's usually right. She's the one who first told me that they were watching us. Yup, and that I shouldn't cut my nails a lot because she doesn't like that done to her. Is that the phone again? Let it go. No, just let it go!

So, that's why I wanted to sleep in this morning. Yes, it was a very busy day. Someone's knocking on the door! It's probably them. Don't you dare answer that door! I didn't think that they came out during the day. I forget to ask Fantasia about that one. Julia Roberts? It could be. Maybe it's that hot guy from the bar. You think I should? Maybe I'll just peek through the curtain a second. Yeah, I'm sure that won't do any harm.

[Steals a glance through the curtain]

It's a midget! No, I'm serious! There's this little midget standing out there with an older lady.

She's holding something. A bag maybe? A bomb? I'm not sure. Are you serious? Answer the door? I'm not sure that's such a good idea. The midget could dart right in here and plant sensors and cameras and we could never

stop here because she's so...well, little. Then again, I am pretty fast so maybe it's not such a risk. Okay, here goes nothing.

Is that the phone? Let it go. If it's important, which most of my calls are, they'll leave a message.

Let's try this again. I am going to open the door now. Be on alert.

[Opens the door cautiously and peeks through the crack]

"Yes?"

"Hi Miss. My name is Jenny and I'm selling cookies for my Girl Scout troupe. Would you like to buy some? I have a bunch of different kinds and all the money goes towards our camping trip."

"Cookies? You're selling cookies?"

Likely story. I wonder what she really has in that box. "Troupe" is probably code for governmental surveillance or federal midget militia or something. Yes, she said cookies. No! Remember, cookies aren't diet food unless they have oatmeal or fruit in them.

"I don't normally eat cookies. The demanding life of a fitness model doesn't usually allow for such treats. Gotta stay that perfect size 3 you know!"

Look at that pitiful expression on the midget's face. The old lady who is with her looks a little confused. She probably thinks she recognizes me from somewhere. Most likely she's jealous, don't you think?

"So you don't wanna by any miss? We have chocolate mint, peanut butter, oatmeal..."

"Oatmeal? Hmmm. I suppose I could take a box of the oatmeal off your hands for you."

See what you made me do? Now I'm buying stuff from the midget. Oh well. At least it's healthy stuff, right? Won't they taste good with some fresh coffee?

"Thank you miss. See mom? I told you the crazy lady would buy some cookies!"

Crazy lady? Oh, I know who she's talking about. That lady across the street is kind of strange. She's always walking that dog of hers. Around and around and around the block they go. Every day! The midget's mom should be careful if she goes over there.

What? You think I'm paranoid or something? I'm the one who captured the bank robber remember. You can't even make toast. Or coffee for that matter. Where's Fantasia? I need to talk to Fantasia.