

**i
hate
the 
inter-
net**

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chapter one

Long after she had committed the only unforgivable sin of the Twenty-First Century, someone on the Internet sent Adeline a message.

The message read: “Dear slut, I hope that you are gang-raped by syphilis-infected illegal aliens.”

The Internet was a wonderful invention. It was a computer network which people used to remind other people that they were awful pieces of shit.

ADELINE RECEIVED THIS MESSAGE because she had committed the only unforgivable sin of the early Twenty-First Century. But before she could arrive at that really big mistake, she had to make several smaller ones.

Some of her other mistakes: (1) She was a woman in a culture that hated women. (2) She’d become kind of famous. (3) She’d expressed unpopular opinions.

Being a kind of famous woman who expressed unpopular opinions in a culture that hated women was in itself a serious mistake, but neither it nor its constituent parts were the big one.

The big one was something else.

THE ABOVE OFFERS only one possible interpretation of the message, with both spelling and grammar adjusted for clarity. The original read: “Drp slut... hope u get gang rape.... bi bunch, uv siphilis elegial alines.....”

It is possible that “elegial alines” was not referencing the citizens of foreign

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countries who arrive in America by methods other than state-approved visas and green cards.

It is also possible that “drp slut” was something other than a general salutation followed by one of the hundreds of derogatory English terms for women. A “drp slut” could be any number of things.

“Drp” itself is somewhat tricky, as it lacks vowels. It might be short for *derp*, a common Internet neologism denoting stupidity. And while “drp” is rendered as *dear* it could as easily be *deep*.

“Slut” is one of the hundreds of derogatory English terms for women. These terms attach importance to the number of a woman’s sexual partners. There are no equivalent terms for men, which is some straight up bullshit.

“SLUT” IS ALSO the Danish word for *end*.

When stores in Denmark approached the final days of a merchandise sale, the proprietors of these stores tended to put up signs announcing a *slutspurt*.

Slutspurt was a colloquialism which meant *end of the sale*. *Slutspurts* were often embarrassing for Danes who hosted native English speakers.

It was possible that whoever sent Adeline the message was fluent in both English and Danish. It was possible their conjunction of the Danish word for *end* and “drp” was an erudite multilingual gambit, referencing the deep end of something. Perhaps a swimming pool.

On the other hand, the message was sent by someone on the Internet. They were probably just another dumb asshole who hated women.

chapter two

In the 1990s, when Adeline was in her early twenties and just out of college, she and her friend Jeremy Winterbloss started working together on a comic book called *Trill*. It was published in 32-page monthly pamphlets, with the art in black-and-white.

Adeline drew the pictures. Jeremy Winterbloss wrote the words.

Trill followed the story of an anthropomorphic cat named Felix Trill as he moved his way through a quasi-medieval world, discovering haunting vistas while battling other anthropomorphic animals.

Most of *Trill* was about a series of wars between anthropomorphic cats and anthropomorphic dogs. This changed with issue #50, when both sides put aside their differences and realized that they had a mutual enemy: hairless apes with a tendency towards fervent monotheism.

This shift in focus followed several months of Jeremy ingesting a prodigious number of psychedelic drugs.

During one acid trip, Jeremy had a vision of Felix Trill. The creation talked to its creator. Due to Jeremy's misfiring neurochemistry, Felix Trill spoke with the voice of an old burnout.

"Hey man," said Felix Trill to Jeremy, "You got it all mixed-up. The way you write me. It's a real bummer. Because me and the dogs and all the other animals, we're only fingers dipping below the surface of the ocean, and you're a fish, deep in the hazy water, and you know the thing about fish, man, fish are full of hang-ups. You're so uptight that all you see is the divided fingers. That's your hassle, not ours. None of us can get with that trip. Your limited perception, man, is making you see five separate entities. You can't see that me and the dogs and the other animals are all connected, we're all part of

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the same hand. Five fingers, one hand. The hand is the important thing, brother. You gotta get more cosmic. Don't be so heavy on the details. Keep it cool, friend."

Adeline and Jeremy published seventy-five issues of *Trill* before changes in the market made the project unprofitable.

Issue #75 appeared in 1999.

JEREMY EARNED A DECENT LIVING off *Trill*. Adeline lived off the money too, but she didn't have the same needs as Jeremy. Adeline's family was rich.

She was from Pasadena, California. She grew up there during the 1970s and 1980s.

Her father had been an oral surgeon who performed a wide range of dental procedures on some very famous people.

The heart of Adeline's father had exploded a few hours after he put a cap on the lower left incisor of two-time Academy Award winner Jason Robards.

Jason Robards was one of those character actors who earns respect and accolades during his working life and is forgotten as soon as he dies. He won his Academy Awards in 1977 and 1978.

The first Academy Award was for playing Ben Bradlee, the editor of the *Washington Post*, in a film called *All the President's Men*. The second Academy Award was for playing Dashiell Hammett, author of *The Glass Key* and *The Maltese Falcon*, in a film called *Julia*.

Both movies were based on books in which the respective authors presented self-aggrandized visions of themselves confronting the systemic evil of governments.

Both movies were better than the books on which they were based. Almost all movies are better than books. Most books are quite bad.

Like this one.

This is a bad novel.

ADELINE'S FATHER LEFT HIS MONEY to Adeline's mother, who turned out to be better at business than Adeline's father.

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Adeline's mother was named Suzanne. Suzanne made sure that both Adeline and Adeline's sister, Dahlia, would never want for nothing.

Suzanne was a failed actress who met Adeline's father while waiting tables at a coffee shop on Wilshire Boulevard. She'd been an extra in several episodes of *Gidget*, a television show about a teenaged girl who enjoys surfing.

Suzanne was an alcoholic.

chapter three

Back in the early 1990s, when they decided to publish *Trill*, both Adeline and Jeremy Winterbloss recognized that their project suffered from two structural disadvantages.

STRUCTURAL DISADVANTAGE #1: the principle products of the comic-book industry were 32-page monthly pamphlets containing drawings of gargantuan-breasted women. These breasts resembled over-inflated volleyballs, much like the ones spiked and served by the cast of *Gidget*.

This focus on gargantuan breasts meant that most of the industry's output was subtle pornography for the mentally backwards.

There'd been a few successful books that featured talking animals, but Jeremy could think of only one semi-successful comic book about an anthropomorphic cat. That book was "*Omaha*" *The Cat Dancer*.

Omaha was created by Reed Waller and Kate Worley. Omaha was a stripper in an urban milieu. Being a cat dancer got Omaha into all kinds of trouble.

The pornography in "*Omaha*" was not subtle. Most issues depicted Omaha having sex with other anthropomorphic animals of many species and genders.

Jeremy showed Adeline a few issues of "*Omaha*" *The Cat Dancer*. Adeline thought it strange that Omaha, a cat, had a dense patch of hair on her mons pubis. But that was comics.

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STRUCTURAL DISADVANTAGE #2: as with any business, the comics industry had its own culture, and that culture was soaked in sexism and racism like a Christmas ham marinating in syrup and ginger.

Jeremy had experienced the sexism and racism first hand, having worked for several years in the late 1980s as an intern at Marvel Comics.

JEREMY WINTERBLOSS was an African–American man, which meant that some of his ancestors were brought to the United States in bondage and put to work in the service of his other ancestors. This second group of ancestors owned the first group.

Many of Jeremy's ancestors were part of the social construct called the White race, and they raped many of Jeremy's other ancestors, the ones who were owned and were part of the social construct called the Black Race, whose members were also known as Coloreds or Negroes or Nigras or any of hundreds of other derogatory words.

There were not many derogatory words for members of the social construct called the White race. The ones that did exist were sort of useless and packed almost no offensive punch.

These were: *honkey, cracker, hillbilly, redneck, peckerwood.*

Peckerwood had some possibilities. The others were pathetic.

SOMETIMES WHEN JEREMY'S MALE ANCESTORS raped Jeremy's female ancestors, the underlying biology would produce babies. When these babies were born, they were owned by their fathers or their fathers' families.

You could rape your property and make new property and that new property would earn you more money. It was a nice time to own people. It was a bad time to be owned.

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION of the White race was pseudoscience revolving around the misapprehension that inessential physical features represented biological distinctions amongst members of the human species.

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Of all the inessential features that led to the social construction of the White race, differences in skin pigmentation were the most prominent.

There was a widely held belief amongst members of the White race that their skin was uncolored and thus *White*. In fact, members of the White race were an unfortunate pink somewhere around the shade of a newborn piglet.

According to certain people who self-described as *People of Color*, which was a remarkably offensive and unexamined phrase, and members of the White Race, *Colored* skin was the visual byproduct of eumelanin's presence in the stratum basale layer of the epidermis.

Eumelanin was the product of melanocytes, which are cells located alongside the basal cells in the stratum basale layer of the epidermis. Under histopathologic examination, eumelanin looked a little like a dried mustard stain.

Most members of the White race were so accustomed to their piglet pink that they couldn't see their own pink. To them, their piglet pink was invisible as the genocides committed by their forefathers.

An entire social order was built around the inability to see what was right in front of, and on, their faces. An entire social hierarchy was built around mustard stains in the epidermis.

This is one of several reasons why many people considered the human species to be a bunch of dumb assholes.

OF COURSE, the social hierarchy's racial component was a generalized dodge to avoid talking about the only real factor in establishing order. Which is to say *money*.

According to many first year graduate students in economics, *money* was a general agreement amongst a group of people that certain tangibles or intangibles represent the ordering of value.

In fact, *money* was the unit by which people measured humiliation.

What would you do for a dollar?

What would you do for ten dollars?

What would you do for a million dollars?

What would you do for a billion dollars?

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ADELIN DIDN'T HAVE EUMELANIN in the basal cell layer of her epidermis and was thus a member of the White race.

This offered her a great deal of social prestige, particularly as she was from a rich family. But she was a woman. Being a woman detracted from that social prestige.

All women in America, even the rich White women, took a ton of shit. They were doomed if they did and doomed if they didn't.

Men had spent millennia treating women like crap. One theory as to the origins of this social ordering suggested that women's lack of upper body strength made them worse at ploughing fields and swinging swords.

Ploughed fields produced food.

Swung swords produced dead humans.

Most societies, being dominated by men, put premium value on eating and killing. This emphasis on strength over intelligence neatly avoided the fact that women are smarter than men.

Women's lack of upper body strength was only one explanation of the social ordering. There were hundreds of ideas for why women were treated like crap but very few practical solutions.

A LITTLE BIT before Adeline made her unforgivable mistake, a billionaire named Sheryl Sandberg wrote a book called *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*. Sheryl Sandberg didn't have much eumelanin in the basale stratum of her epidermis.

In her book, Sheryl Sandberg proposed that women who weren't billionaires could stop being treated like crap by men in the workplace if only they smiled more and worked harder and acted more like the men who treated them like crap.

Billionaires were always giving advice to people who weren't billionaires about how to become billionaires.

It was almost always intolerable bullshit.

SANDBERG BECAME A BILLIONAIRE by working for a company named Facebook.

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Facebook made its money through an Internet web and mobile platform which advertised cellphones, feminine hygiene products and breakfast cereals.

This web and mobile platform was also a place where hundreds of millions of people offered up too much information about their personal lives.

Facebook was invented by Mark Zuckerberg, who didn't have much eumelanin in the basale stratum of his epidermis.

What is your gender? asked Facebook.

What is your relationship status? asked Facebook.

What is your current city? asked Facebook.

What is your name? asked Facebook.

What are your favorite movies? asked Facebook.

What is your favorite music? asked Facebook.

What are your favorite books? asked Facebook.

ADELINE'S FRIEND, the writer J. Karacehennem, whose last name was Turkish for *Black Hell*, had read an essay called "Generation Why?" by Zadie Smith, a British writer with a lot of eumelanin in the basale stratum of her epidermis. Zadie Smith's essay pointed out that the questions Facebook asked of its users appeared to have been written by a 12-year-old.

But these questions weren't written by a 12-year-old. They were written by Mark Zuckerberg.

Mark Zuckerberg was a billionaire. Mark Zuckerberg was such a billionaire that he was the boss of other billionaires. He was Sheryl Sandberg's boss.

J. Karacehennem thought that he knew something about Facebook that Zadie Smith, in her decency, hadn't imagined.

"The thing is," said J. Karacehennem, whose last name was Turkish for *Black Hell*, "that we've spent like, what, two or three hundred years wrestling with existentialism, which really is just a way of asking, *Why are we on this planet? Why are people here? Why do we lead our pointless lives?* All the best philosophical and novelistic minds have tried to answer these questions and all the best philosophical and novelistic minds have failed to produce a working answer. Facebook is amazing because finally we understand why we have hometowns and why we get into relationships and why we eat our stupid dinners and why we have names and why we own idiotic cars and