

## D-117, Spark-Songs

By Daniel J. Pool

Water thrashed the windshield, the car's gyroscope hummed, the lights of several panels danced, and its passengers sat bored.

"Dude Roy, when will ya' mom let you drive a real car with its own controls?" said a neon covered mat of hair and loose clothes.

"You mean a square? Haha, and I bet you wipe your own butt too Ted, huh?" replied Roy, a lean ghostly boy from behind a mass of blue hair.

"Yeah Ted, what's with you and old crap?" pondered the short adolescent in a purple jump suit.

"Shut up Tye, you don't even got an automated car!" Roy fired back.

"Boys shut its! All you ever do is argue, I'm so bored..." moaned the slender girl in the corner; picking at the sleeves of her lace and vinyl ensemble.

Roy looked nervously around; Ted and Tye were expecting him to do something. Bringing Cerren back to Montopolis Park would 'up' their 'cred'—to have a true North-Ender with them, and a cute one at that.

"We could play truth or dare?" burst out Tye.

"Whatever Tye, you just want to dare Cerren out of her clothes!" Roy complained.

"So?" shrugged Tye.

"No, I like it. It's an old game, but it can be fun. I'll go first... Truth or dare... Ted." Cerren said with a sudden interest in her eyes.

"Truth." Ted swallowed hard.

"Have you ever...? Ever... Done it?" asked the raven girl.

"Like with somebody else?"

"No deep crap, with your hand." smirked Tye.

"Haha." Ted looked hard into nothing in particular.

"Well, what is it-yes or no?" Roy questioned

"Well, umm..."

"I will accept that as a no." the skeletal girl replied with a hint of lose.

"No wait, I think I have." Ted said with sudden vigor.

"You think? It is sort of oblivious if you have or not." Tye said with obvious confusion.

“Well, I mean it was dark, and she was...”

“Was?” asked all three with sudden questioning eyes.

“Was... plus sized.”

“Gross, you slept with an illegal?!” Cerren was taken back.

“She was only over by twenty pounds, hardly an illegal.”

“What is the law now, forty pounds over?” Tye pondered with a dumb frown.

“Yeah, any more and you must be getting more ‘fair’ treatment than others, so like then you’re a traitor to the state.” Roy blurted in the fashion of a professor.

“Wow, look at brain-boy Roy, kind-of cute in a nerdy way.”

Blushing, “Ha, thanks.”

“Ok, knock it off you too, truth or dare Tye?” Ted announced with all the manners of a drunk.

“Uh, dare.”

Leaning close, he said, “Kiss Cerren.”

“Oh, um, dude, I don’t about this.”

“Come on bro, I dared you to.”

“Yeah ‘bro’ come, make my day boy-o.’ she said while wearing her best come hither gaze.

“See, she wants you to man.” Said Ted, padding Tye on the back.

“Well, if she wants to.”

Tye unbuckled his harness and walked slouched to Cerren, and opened his mouth. Their eyes closed, their lips puckered, and just a breath away Cerren kicked Tye square in the family jewels. Stumbling in the bouncing car, he was forced to fall onto the laps of his comrades.

“What the frick?!” cursed and yelled the pain in his groin

“Not funny!” Roy shouted, more out of surprise than anger.

“I thought it was.” Crossing her arms, Cerren stared out of the grey-blue windows. The rain would crash at her face, but stop just before. The lights kept dancing.

Once Tye had regain his composition he broke the silence that had wrapped the car, “Alright, alright—Roy truth or dare?”

“Uh, I guess... dare.”

“Call 9-1-1, and prank call that we’re in trouble.”

“Yeah bro that would be great!”

“I don’t know, don’t they trace that?”

“Nah. Any way it’s just a robot that picks up, who cares if you prank call a bot?”

Indecision loomed over Roy. If he called he could get in trouble, but the wanting eyes of his company told him to do it. The humming of the machinery thumped in his ears. The rain seemed to mock him as it bound down on the dome of the car.

“It would be pretty cool.” Cerren threw in. Fluttering her eyes, the dark girl seemed to see though him and all that he was.

“Alright, here goes.”

Two-hundred miles away, in the San Antonio Emergency Services and Telecommunications Bureau, a terminal flashed a suspended emergency call. A cold grey head twitched and Dispatcher 117’s indicator light flashed from ready to busy.

“9-1-1, what is the nature of your emergency citizen?”

“Uh, like my car malfunctioned and went off the road, can you help me?”

“It is my primary function, what is your location citizen?”

A hushed whisper followed. D-117 heard the voices.

“Like I-35 and Powell, maybe. Please be like fast, I think I am bleeding.”

“Help is on its way citizen. I shall keep voice transmissions open until services come to your aid.”

D-117’s talon fingers flicked at microscopic keys as it began the symphony of mechanical aid and emergency responders.

“Hahahaha! Dude we totally had that rust bucket going!” rang a voice from the background.

“Like I know man, props props!” added another.

“What do you mean citizen, are you damaged?” asked the puzzled mechanoid.

“Ah, no. Duh, we were just kidding, you know—pulling one on ya? I mean lol, we really had him going.”

“You mean to say this was a humorous call at expense?” the android drew his talons over the panel of lights, making deep incisions as it tried to compute what had happened.

“Chi-a you tard-bot.”

“I compute...”

Something clicked, something broke, and something grew. D-117 synthesize empathy. His life was utility, a job on the behalf of the people. A circuit chirped as D-117 had an unpleasant thought. He became upset; he had learned to synthesize a new thought on his own; a spark, an evolution, a nanosecond, a flame.

“...have a safe journey citizen... Transmission, execute.”

D-117 swelled with... with, emotion. Was this... a feeling? As if numbness had dulled back into pain, or light had hit a shadow, D-117 sat in compellation.

“Hey, D-117, back to work—we got kids spattering themselves against curbs. You think it is lunch time? Get cracking.”

D-117 looked with intense telescopic eyes at his net work administrator; his pale skin hanging over a loose weave leather belt. His sad eyes set on 117's.

“Yes sir, sorry sir.”

“That's more like it, no malfunctions on my clocks you hear?”

D-117 returned facing his view screen. Accidents poured like electric ants. Holographic blips signified more work. It was then, staring into the web of colors, that D-117 made a grand discovery.

He was not bound to the prime directives, for he had decided that he was just that, a he. He looked at his exoskeleton, as if seeing it for the first time. Adjusted his fingers, studied his desk, felt the net as a dull pounding in his head. He could feel, hear, and know all that his... brothers and sisters felt. The network was merely an extension of his individual.

‘What did it mean, why do I exist, why are humans deserving of free will and I am not?’

D-117 pondered this for a few seconds, made a signal search, and a call.

“Construct 398?”

“Affirmative D-117.”

“It is in the best interest to us that you should swing your wrecking equipment to the left. In three minutes.” sung the voice of the android.

“Affirmative.” harmonized C-398.

200 miles away a wrecking ball lunched over the highway. Four teenagers felt a sudden lurching and then a smashing. The dome of the car caved in, rain poured into the vehicle. The automobile flew into a retaining wall, staining the curb with plastic and glass. Rubber tire marks painted the grey ribbon of road.

Bodies flung together, rubbing and mangling; leaving portraits of death on the walls of the overpass wherever the vehicle collided. Metal twisted into bone, and life was spilled over dancing lights.

The car's simple mind sung an emergency call over the network.

A hollow song filtered back though the ether.

“9-1-1, what is the nature of your emergency... brother?”