

## CHAPTER 10: DARLA'S SEXY DANCE

ELVIS D. TRIP

As Brain-O Director Darla Trivit was floating among clouds and fog while licking postage stamps in Cloud Land (two activities that she found to be most annoying), she focused on the small island within her mind where she could still control herself and where she often visited when Director Jack Cavants was being a particularly obnoxious toad—one of his more basic traits which had likely been established long before he was born—and, curiously, imagined herself to be enjoying a most excellent Cuban cigar while noting, as Professor Sigmund Freud had once observed in one flavor or another, firstly that sometimes a cigar is just a cigar and secondly that, insofar as Darla was concerned, this was one of those sometimes. Cavants—who (like Darla) was a Brain-O and who as the puzzling consequence of a minor indiscretion Darla had committed in the presence of the Imperial Director had been given nearly complete control of Darla for two years (apparently as a reward for him but actually as a punishment for her)--certainly had a penchant for being toadish!

For Physicals--those humans who had not yet abandoned their bodies in favor of living as brains within mirrored stlassic spheres---two years was a long time; but, for a Brain-O who was connected to an elaborate and quite complex set of illegal Arvellian perceptual interface modifying, enhancing, and controlling devices which were being operated by another Brain-O who had the security override code for the stlassic sphere of the Brain-O being controlled, two years easily became a virtual eternity.

The Arvellian equipment, among other things, could transform a few milliseconds of real-time into hours and hours of virtual time; and were it not for Darla's little island of escape and safety, she would likely have gone insane (or, at least, would have become quite batty). Of course, she had her batty moments; but, generally, she made an effort to endure Cavants' tinkering with her mind while simultaneously making every effort to devise some way

effectively to tinker with Cavants' mind. Darla had not become a powerful company Director by being a fool; and, even though it might take a while, she was certain there was some way to exert a bit of her influence on Cavants.

Lately, Darla had begun noticing a pattern in Cavants' strange machinations; and the pattern of events usually began by Cavants making her float among clouds and fog while she was forced to lick postage stamps. After doing this for a while, Cavants then would begin playing musical recordings from the 1930s and 1940s of the planet Earth; and since this music nearly always made Darla want to do what she called her "sexy dance", Darla would soon be dancing like Ginger Rogers in an enchanting private ballroom that suddenly appeared in an open area among the clouds and fog of this place she called Cloud Land. At the edge of the ballroom, the dance floor blended smoothly into the fog; but although there were carefully placed bright lights all around the ballroom and a spotlight which followed her as she danced around the ballroom, she occasionally would glimpse twinkling stars through the clouds that slowly drifted overhead. Calling this surreal was no exaggeration; because, much to Cavants' credit as a skilled Arvellian interface controller, Darla truly felt like she was in a movie for which she was the director, choreographer, and star.

Once, very recently, as she was dancing through the air (something she had discovered she could do if she imagined herself being able to do it), Darla had the strange thought that doing her "sexy dance" might have some type of affect on Cavants; and mostly as an experiment, she increased the intensity of her dancing around the ballroom (something she could easily do as long as she wanted without having to be concerned about becoming tired, since she was a Brain-0 and this was a simulation, really, rather than something which was real in any tangible way). If the mentation required to do this required her brain to do more work, her stlassic sphere's life support systems would provide the necessary chemicals and energy her brain needed; and for practical purposes, she could do whatever

she desired to do so long as, in her current circumstances, she wanted to do it and Cavants allowed her to do it.

Although her sense of time was a bit confused by the Arvellian perceptual interface equipment, she nevertheless had a reasonably good sense of how time passed in the surreal ballroom; and even though she was not entirely certain this was the case, it appeared to her that once she had increased the intensity of her sexy dancing, Cavants had not interrupted her dancing by being a toad and making her float endlessly through clouds and fog while licking postage stamps. In fact, the more she pondered this (albeit very privately when she escaped to her little island), the more she began to suspect that Cavants actually enjoyed watching her dance like Ginger Rogers!

Being especially bright and understanding fully on many levels that enjoyment and pleasure are powerful motivators, Darla began to devise a strategy which she hoped would increase her power in this strange game Cavants was playing with her, apparently toward some goal which she simply could not understand or imagine at the moment no matter how much she tried to comprehend it. Her strategy was very simple, really; and the first step was to engage Cavants in some type of conversation. Virtually anything would be significant because, so far, Cavants had never said even one word to her formally. Instead, at least as it appeared to her, Cavants devoted most of his attention to operating the various Arvellian perceptual interfacing devices and, perhaps occasionally, devoted a bit of his attention to observing her in some way that she sensed but could not exactly describe. If she had been a cup cake or a glass of wine, she might have thought that Cavants was tasting her; but insofar as Darla knew, there was no way to taste the thoughts of a Brain-O.

Had Darla known a little bit more about science, physiology, and the capabilities of some of the more advanced Arvellian perceptual interfacing equipment, she would not have been so surprised to discover not only that it was possible to taste the thoughts of Brain-Os but also

that it was possible to taste the thoughts of Physicals (although this latter activity required installing a miniature interface into a certain part of the brain of the Physical being tasted, something which was easily done but very difficult to detect, even by the most advanced non-Arvellian methods). In fact, although it was unbeknown to Darla, Cavants' primary activity and purpose in everything he did with Darla was to taste her thoughts more fully than any other Brain-0 or Physical before; and since Cavants had been perfecting the Art of Tasting Thoughts for centuries, in a strange way it was a bit of an honor that he had selected Darla specifically to become his thought tasting masterpiece. Cavants truly was a grand master of the Art of Tasting Thoughts; and he constantly strove to move the Art of Tasting Thoughts to new and ever more fascinating levels.

Of course, Darla knew nearly nothing about this aspect of Cavants and, even if she had known about it, she did not have the formal scientific training required to understand it mathematically; but she had one thing that Junior Director Jack Cavants did not have and likely never would have. Specifically, she had the fascinatingly curious and oftentimes remarkably accurate talent which most common folk and experts alike called "female intuition". She might not know so much about mathematics and physics; but she could tell when someone was pulling her chain; and in this particular instance it certainly appeared intuitively obvious to her that Cavants was making a diligently concerted effort to pull her chain over and over and over. And, from her perspective (which, no doubt, was enhanced considerably by female intuition), if Cavants was pulling her chain, then she might be able to pull his chain; and as she was pondering this insight, which was beginning to be more like an epiphany, she remembered an old adage about a goose and a gander, which she found to be quite amusing and more than a little bit instructive, in an oddly curious way.

As minutes changed to hours, and hours changed to days, Darla continued thinking about her new strategy

until, on one enchanted summer's evening in the surreal ballroom that Cavants had so eloquently constructed for her, Darla put her plan into motion. She (or more correctly Cavants) had selected a beautiful, paper thin, translucent black silk dress and a cute pair of matching high heel dancing slippers with ankle straps and open toes; and since this was her favorite attire for ballroom dancing, she realized that Cavants had either learned how to read her mind or certainly had excellent taste in fashion and had somehow influenced her visual and tactile senses for a very specific reason. Although she did not know precisely what Cavants' motivations were, she recognized that it did not matter so much, really; and for whatever reason, her realization that this appeared to be a special and significant moment, in fact, allowed her to make it all the more special and significant in terms of her plan.

From Darla's newly found perspective, if Cavants desired to dress her elegantly with a hint of sensual eroticism and to play with her like a doll, then perhaps she would become a bit more of a doll than Cavants had ever imagined she could be; and, simply stated, this is what she did. As she danced around the surreal ballroom, instead of focusing entirely on enjoying the moment and herself, Darla began looking around the ballroom a bit more intensely but nevertheless surreptitiously. In effect, although it is difficult to describe in a tangible way, what she was doing was attempting to look beyond the boundaries of the surreal ballroom toward the goal perhaps of seeing or sensing more of what Cavants was doing or observing; and after doing this for a while, she did something which quite startled Cavants. She spoke directly to him in a voice that he had neither expected nor imagined to hear, especially considering the dulling affects of the elaborate and complex Arvellian perceptual interfacing equipment he was using to control Darla.

DARLA TRIVIT

"Do you like watching me?"

ELVIS D. TRIP

Granted, this was a very simple question, and it was not the first thing that Darla had ever said; but the way she said it suggested to Cavants that Darla was beginning to understand the elaborate game he was playing with her. This so surprised Cavants that he momentarily let his attention (which was focused intensely on controlling the Arvellian perceptual interfacing equipment) wander, which, in turn, caused the Arvellian artificial intelligence algorithms (which were designed always to expect and, for practical purposes, to demand to be given intense focus) immediately to search for a controlling brain. In this brief instant, the only nearby brain which was intensely focused on controlling anything was Darla's brain; and in a very dutiful way the Arvellian perceptual interfacing equipment not only understood on the most intimately deep level precisely what Darla wanted, needed, and desired to hear but also captured the mind of Junior Director Jack Cavants; created a suitably attired simulacrum for him; made this simulation of him appear in the surreal ballroom; stood him directly in front of Darla; made his eyes look into hers; and then directed him to say this word:

JACK CAVANTS

"Yes!"

ELVIS D. TRIP

In another galaxy, thousands of light years away, Lolla Waigi (the favorite Arvellian consort of the Imperial Director) sprouted a small blossom whose enticing fragrance was her way of sharing an amusing thought with the Imperial Director when she was in her plant phase.

LOLLA WAIGI

"It begins, lover!"

ELVIS D. TRIP

The Imperial Director moved nearer to Lolla Waigi, rotated his olfactory interface next to her small blossom, let her thought fill his mind with its enticing fragrance,

and replied,

IMPERIAL DIRECTOR

"Soon, my love! Soon!"

ELVIS D. TRIP

Back in the surreal ballroom floating among the clouds, rolling fog, and twinkling stars, Junior Director Jack Cavants who as a Physical had been afflicted with the curious medical condition called "Jumping French Canadian of Maine" began flapping his arms wildly and screaming hysterically,

JACK CAVANTS

"Yes!" "Yes!" "Yes!" "Yes!" "Yes!" . . .

ELVIS D. TRIP

Outwardly, Director Darla Trivit did not move (or even twitch) a muscle; but inwardly to herself she smiled and thought,

DARLA TRIVIT

"What's good for the goose, apparently is just as good for the gander!"

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