

Darla Monica

By Sheila Naranja

## Chapter 1: Crossing Paths

When Brad Yayger first met Darla Monica, she was a twenty-something woman sitting at a café table next to that of Brad and Darla Wilshire's mom. She mistook Brad for Darla Wilshire's dad. That was natural since they all sported blond hair. It soon became obvious to Ms. Monica that Brad was visiting L.A. on a business trip, and that there was no relation to the Wilshire family. Brad mostly talked with Ms. Wilshire's mom about his work on a supercomputer project for a C.G.I. firm selling storage systems to movie companies.

When they started working together on the Cyberjunkies project, they both had forgotten all about their time together at the café. It came back to Darla after she had been deboned for memory masking. She heard the name "Fun Macrosystems," and memories of the café meeting came back to her. It was a cascading flood of memories going back to the mid-nineties. She asked Brad if he recalled the café event, and he did. When she said she was the one at the next table who asked Brad, "What the fuck is a supercomputer???", Brad said that brought back a flood of memories of his last days at Fun Macrosystems.

Ms. Monica also remembered the way that Darla Wilshire was fixated with her mom's flip phone. It was one of the things she brought up when the three of them remembered the occasion twenty-five years later. Little Ms. Wilshire hated the way her mom hogged the phone. There was probably a bit of toddler jealousy at work when mom ignored the wee lass while chatting on a call.

As Brad recalled the event, it brought to mind a Fun Macrosystems Christmas party when Brad wore a tuxedo. He was never a tux kind of guy, but his boss told him that only losers attend Fun parties without one. When he arrived at the party with Canis Personality at his side, he discovered that only losers wore a tux. His boss was surprised that Brad had taken the joke seriously. The joke was ultimately on the boss when he wound up working for Bilbo Snakes at Microsloth.

Neex also recounted a time when she observed Brad at a Sillycon Christmas party. That party was held on a Hornyblower boat. Brad likes to ridicule Marin party boats as much smaller than San Francisco boats. The former are ritzier, but far too small for Sillycon parties. They are more appropriate for Newscum/Brood parties. (They rubbed voters the wrong way when they attended parties at the Lavanderie Francaise and at the Getty mansion.)

Neex was made famous with the publication of her Vagina Show podcasts. She has a cult following in Cyberjunkies circles with her distinct laugh and her undermining of Chad Toatenburg's podcast career. The people who love Brad tend to hate Chad. They will not let him get a word in edgewise. National Pharmaceutical Podcast attempted to obtain a grant for its work in following Brad around town, but their marketing collateral did not make the cut.

Brad chatted up Sheila Naranja about his work with Neex and his experience with Toatenburg as he noshed on a gyro wrap at one of his favorite undisclosed locations. He also told her about his tuxedo experiences at both Fun Macro and at Eepotch. The latter was for a wedding party thrown by his former boss, Gee Cracker. As an O.G. Brit, Gee insisted that all members of the groom's party wear identical

tuxedos. Unlike his Fun Macro experience, he wore Gee's tux for free. (He had to fork out hard cash to rent the Fun Macro party tux.) It was the only way Gee could lure him into the party.

Brad assured Sheila that the gyro was vegan. After all, the cow and lamb were fed a plant-based diet. This brought to mind Brad's experience with a woman wearing vinyl pants. He encountered her on Market Street in San Francisco during the COVID Crisis. He was on his way from a computer appointment to an inspection of Corona Heights Park. (Brad's park inspection work was essential for his comedy writing and other humanitarian endeavors.)

When he asked the woman if her pants were genuine leather, she replied that they were vegan leather. He had no idea that the skin of vegans was used as leather. After commenting on this to the woman, she walked away with a disturbed look on her countenance. He turned to a guy who was watching the whole exchange, and said, "She just doesn't want to admit that they are plastic."

Brad earned a spot in Gee's wedding party when he befriended him as a subordinate and as a colleague. Eepotch lent Brad to Gee in order to back-fill a hole in his staffing. The assignment was temporary, but their friendship endured. It all started when Gee would invite Brad to join him outside for a cigarette break. They eventually had weekly lunches where they chatted on a number of topics.

Gee was an old dog Brit who failed to keep current on technical and cultural matters. He acted as if he worked for I.B.M. in the sixties even though it was the early nineties. His mail style reflected the use of a teletype machine with the absence of lower case characters. When he referred to a "man number," Brad mistook it for a reference to penis length. Gee actually meant "employee ID number." He shared much in common with technicians who refused to move beyond machine assembler language in order to keep up with current high level language practices.

Darla Monica, on the other hand, quickly adapted to modernization when she took up ecstatic massage techniques, abandoning antiquated, non-ecstatic practices. Darla came to be one of Brad's star students. Perhaps that is why he connected her to Sheila Naranja. More on that to come.