

Cheryl Doe, Episode Three
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A note to readers

This work portrays a number of themes and concepts, some which may cause discomfort in one way or another. As such, this page contains warnings for content which include, but are not limited to:

Transphobia

Racism

The Locus Place apartment complex was a busy place on Saturdays. Just before ten, cars would be parked bumper-to-bumper as several doors were held ajar for impromptu guests throughout the day. Jamie was on the third floor of the complex, with her door being the only one shut. Her hands were folded as her chin rested upon them. An eerie white and blue light washed over her face as she stared dead-on at a page which the title was "GcvU – Login." She understood that Glocomovations was a choice vendor for many companies that needed phone support lines, so it obviously knows how to run itself – but the training courses being part of "Glocomovations University" struck Jamie as utterly silly as a concept. Nevertheless, Jamie was caught in a stare down with her "Computer Care and Safety" course which was due Monday. It had been forty minutes she had been staring; Jamie contemplated why she hadn't started and finished it by now. She asked any guiding forces to make her do it and get on with her weekend. And guiding forces spoke through her as she closed the browser tab with her lips voicing the verdict as a resounding "Nope."

Jamie flopped onto her bed, face down, groaning in frustration. It wouldn't take more than half an hour; she knew this, but the idea of doing it drained her of all motivation and energy. The lock screen read "12:34" as she woke her phone. "Nooo...." she whined melodramatically, "My morning's already gone." Her phone's notification bar showed that she had unread text messages. Upon further inspection, there were five unread messages – all from Nat. She hadn't used her phone much lately, yet became angry at herself for not responding. She decided she would apologize later: she was going to join him – along with Jim – for a few rounds of online multiplayer tonight.

Jamie planned to prepare lunch for herself today, but her sweet tooth pushed her in the direction of baking cookies for the week; she had not thought about how she'd yet to have eaten snacks at her recent job, despite having worked there for seven months. And so, her afternoon was spent baking and packing snickerdoodles.

Nightfall rolled upon her relatively quickly. The pungent aroma of cinnamon permeated throughout the apartment. Orange, crackling leaves kissed her window against a fading twilight. The oven clock read "6:41" as Jamie was packing the last of her cookies.

"Shit!" she cursed to herself, placing the last bag in the refrigerator. She made a mad dash to her room and signed into her computer to start up tonight's game. Jim told her they would be playing a first-person shooter.

She was logging into her game client when Jim sent her an IM, and she responded in turn.

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HydroCannonAbs: jamie the games put off till  
tomorrow nat cant make it
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cyldoe: Really? Did he sya why
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cyldoe: say*
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HydroCannonAbs: said his moms making him study  
for a math test
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HydroCannonAbs: so he said he wont be on this weekend
cyl DOE: So why tomorrow?
HydroCannonAbs: he said that hell try tomorrow, but im not holding my breath that hell be here
cyl DOE: So it'll be just us, then?
HydroCannonAbs: yeah probabl
cyl DOE: ok
HydroCannonAbs: i guess you can do that training class now :p
cyl DOE: How do you know about that???
HydroCannonAbs: word gets around fast in it yo
cyl DOE: :\
HydroCannonAbs: what...
cyl DOE: Why didn't you tell me that yesterday? It feels creepy you saying that now.
HydroCannonAbs: didnt mean to scare you. sorry.
cyl DOE: It's ok.
HydroCannonAbs: SO DO IT. SCRUB.
cyl DOE: fuq u. lol

Jamie signed off, and found herself at the Glocomovations University login page – signing in and saying “Fuck,” over the course of one long breath. The design was bright, glossy, and instilled a feeling of overall tackiness. The course began with an interactive animation that dropped in framerate intermittently, making her PC that she had built a year ago seem to run like it had been a decade. Grating audio assaulted her ears with an overzealous “Welcome to the Glocomovations Computer Care and Safety Course. By the time you complete this course, you will...”

Even with the voice being distinctly feminine, it instantly reminded Jamie of Daniel Stamper and his artificial speaking. The overly perfectly chipper narrator dictated the text in the lesson, complete with still photos of stereotypically dressed office workers that had impossibly happy faces. It went over the principles of not unplugging the computer to shut it down, the compliance guidelines for ergonomics, and avoiding applications such as the command terminal, among other subjects. A “knowledge check” of six questions later, and the fifteen minute ordeal was over. It left Jamie with the feeling that it had been hours, not minutes; it also left her confused on how this constituted as a course, and quite frankly, rather offended for such an insult to her intelligence.

Jamie now had the remainder of the night to herself with the stress over finishing her

assigned course gone. She was up past midnight at her desk meddling with the various control surfaces she acquired in her late teen years. To the left of her monitor, in its dim glow, lain two spiral-bound notebooks – drafts haphazardly sketched onto staff paper. Some pieces had their titles crossed out, others with entire sections marked out with an X, and all of the pages rife with eraser marks and smudges. Jamie was hunched over in her seat, at this point, wearing nothing but a worn oversized hoodie with a t-shirt underneath. She caught herself dreaming of fame and glamor: rose-tinted scenarios repeated themselves, pulling her deeper into feelings of its false satisfaction. There wasn't a snowball's chance in Hell that being famous for her music would solve any of her problems, much less all of them. Playing at live shows would not stop “roadkill” from being used in the same sentence as her name. Nor would it impede the usage of “Doug” over “Jamie.” It wouldn't stop the anxiety. It wouldn't make her less lonely. It wouldn't do any of that – her dreams of fame were grossly distorted, and she knew that. Yet, she could not resist the comfort those fantasies gave her. Those ideas gave her the same warmth as her thoughts of Jacqueline – both fundamentally wrong as they were equally tempting. The monitor's light was still on, and radiated on Jamie's face; her face was glowing, too – and she ached for someone to tell her that, as the comfort brought her to slumber with a lone tear's trail down her cheek.

The next morning was a rude awakening for the young doe; her alarm was blaring, and that was the first sound she heard today. She pried the pair of studio headphones from atop her ears and trudged over to her bedside. She smacked the roof of her gingerbread house alarm clock to halt the offending noise, then took a finger to her lips and made a shushing sound while glaring menacingly at it. She flopped onto her unmade bed and went right back to sleep – only to be woken again ten minutes later. She only moved her arm: reaching behind her nightstand and unplugged the clock outright. She then drew the hood of her sweatshirt over her face, and tugged harshly on the drawstrings, making an obscene hand gesture to the clock before going back to sleep.

Noon had passed when Jamie came to. Her natural curls were a mess as she peeled her face from a pillow, damp with slobber. The reverie had since long gone, but there was no new sadness to take its place. It was in that which she remembered to take her medicine for today: two small tablets, taken with water and food. She would sometimes recite that to herself as to commit it to memory.

Jamie took her medicine, then made breakfast. She was somewhat perturbed, making breakfast in the afternoon, but she thought it better than missing a meal. She burned the rest of the daylight writing: it was a rather infrequent activity she engaged in – sometimes she could write endlessly for consecutive nights and days, schedule permitting; other times, the criticality of her internal editor stopped her from completing a first draft – her own nitpicking and brutal commentary slaying her motivation before she could write a single paragraph.

With a waning gibbous moon in clear view, Jamie was again at her computer, signing into her game client. She was wary of tonight's game – she normally didn't play first-person shooters, and this was a new community to her, all of them were Jim's friends. She joined the server Jim sent; it looked as if she arrived early as there were twelve open slots in the lobby.

Jim was there, waiting. He added her to a group private chat with a “p_kitty719.” They all conversed in chat.

HydroCannonAbs: wazzup biiiitch!!!!!!
 cyldoe: Fuck you, too, Abs. :P
HydroCannonAbs: sup?
 cyldoe: Not much, did some writing, you?
HydroCannonAbs: church, helped my mom run
 errands, weed
 p_kitty719: hayyyy cyldoe
 cyldoe: Yo, friend of Abs', I presume?
 p_kitty719: you presume right lol
 cyldoe: And dickabs didn't introduce
 you?
HydroCannonAbs: i was busy
 cyldoe: Still makes you an ass. :T
HydroCannonAbs: but i was
 cyldoe: YOU
 cyldoe: AN
 cyldoe: ASS
 cyldoe: .
HydroCannonAbs: D:
 p_kitty719: lmao

The lobby was filled, and the match began. Jamie did not have much play time as she was often killed and waiting to respawn: she was the first to run out in the open, firing with extreme prejudice at whomever was closest. Each time. Every time. By the time it was over, she held the lowest rank in the group – insults were hurled by teammates and opponents alike at her over microphone and lobby chat, getting nastier by the minute. Jamie posted in the group chat while waiting for the next match.

 cyldoe: Yeahhh... these guys are
 dickbags, so I'm gonna mosey the
 fuck on out of here.
HydroCannonAbs: try being a sniper
 cyldoe: Nah, I think I'll pass.
HydroCannonAbs: trust me
HydroCannonAbs: youll love it

HydroCannonAbs: do eet
HydroCannonAbs: ...please
 cyldoe: Eh, alright. :T
HydroCannonAbs: alriiighttttt

A new match began; Jamie obscured herself in a tree at Jim's direction. She got about eight kills between each of the few instances she was killed. At the conclusion of the round, more insults were hurled at Jamie. In happenstance, "roadkill" was used a few times, prompting others to pile on and cackle over the microphone "I'll fucking run him over with my van!" Jamie gleefully typed into the lobby chat.

 cyldoe: SUCK MY DICK!
 cyldoe: CHOKE ON IT!

The lobby exploded with anger, and vindication tempted the doe to stay for one or two more matches to get her message across and rub it in their faces, but instead took heed to her better judgment and sign off, lest one of the other players does something malicious in rash execution.

Closing the game window, Jamie saw she had a notification in her game client: "p_kitty719 wants to be your friend." Jamie couldn't help but feel a little put off by such a random request, yet took a chance and approved it. She started an IM conversation.

 cyldoe: Hi hi!
p_kitty719: heyy
p_kitty719: ty for accepting
 cyldoe: No problem! :D
p_kitty719: you got free time
 cyldoe: I'm about to head to bed.
 cyldoe: But I have a little time, what's up?
p_kitty719: nm
p_kitty719: i wanted to say gg for whooping
 ass the 2nd round. your pretty
 good for a beginning
 cyldoe: Hehe, ty. Got rekt in the first
 round, tho.
 cyldoe: LOL
p_kitty719: lmao
p_kitty719: but you were good

cyldoe: ty
cyldoe: I gotta get my furry ass to bed,
tho.
cyldoe: Night! :D
p_kitty719: before you go one question
cyldoe: Hmm?
p_kitty719: Your name cyldoe
p_kitty719: Are yuo really a doe
cyldoe: Yeah hwy do you ask
cyldoe: why*
p_kitty719: you dont seem like a doe in chat
p_kitty719: no offense btw
cyldoe: None taken.
cyldoe: Gotta go to bed now, night!
p_kitty719: nite

Jamie turned off her computer – now more put off by the question “p_kitty” asked, but pushed the thought from her head as she crawled into bed so she could be rested for work tomorrow.

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