

Debauched Minutiae

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Allow me to introduce myself...

The first contribution to something like this always feels a little awkward. It's a bit like arriving at a party late: you're sure there are people you know in the house *somewhere*, but you can't seem to find them and someone's already eaten all the prawn crackers.

I'm Abi. I'm fairly new to fandom, really: second-gen fan (Ken Brown's daughter, some of you may remember him from times gone by though he's all but gafiated now), arrived in fandom in my own right at the WorldCon in 2005. Met Flick, got my name in the papers (well, the at-con newsletters, anyway), became mildly obsessed with LiveJournal, went to Picocon and PloktaDangerPi and Eastercon and all the First Thursday meets, turned up at a lot of parties, ran for and subsequently lost a fan fund, started a fanzine (Demeter's Daughter, I'm working on the third issue now), am doing my bit for Year Of The Teledu, the rest is the Fan History of The Future.

I'm not at all sure what else to say by way of introduction. Obviously female, reluctantly goth, ardently bisexual, vaguely anglo-Catholic, perpetually broke, staunchly feminist. The best description I ever heard of myself was from a friend of mine who said the other day, "ahh yes, that's Abi. She smokes like a chimney, she drinks like a fish, and she dresses like Neil Gaiman's Death. Don't worry, though - she's alright really."

Employment Pigeon

Sad as though I am to admit it, my eighteen-month tenure as a Lady of Leisure (which began after my fiancée passed away and I sort of Went Mad) has necessarily reached its end. With the help of my fabulous friends I've been locating NI numbers and applying for passports and ringing banks and goodness knows what else and now I'm faced with the Big Decision: temp for a while, or apply for a ground-level position in the Civil Service?

Books

Unusually for me I seem to be reading embarrassingly slowly at the moment, having managed only twenty-three thus far this year.

I'm currently on Kushiel's Dart by Jacqueline Carey, which was recommended to me by Kari when I was staying with her and Phil the other week. Despite my initial misgivings ("This isn't a book, it's a commitment! It'll have left a toothbrush in my bathroom by the time I've finished it!") I'm actually really enjoying it and will seek out it's sequels at some point.

Next I suspect I shall try CS Lewis's *That Hideous Strength*, having read and enjoyed the first two in the trilogy earlier in the year. My 'to-read' pile is terrifyingly small, though, at the moment, so I shall take any recommendations for New Stuff I Should Read!

Culture

I seem to have been singularly devoid of culture lately. I did go to see *Cabaret* at the Lyric Theatre on Shaftesbury Avenue the other week, though, and it was brilliant. Despite having seen the film several thousand times I'd never managed to see it staged before, and I certainly wasn't disappointed.

Honour Blackman as Frau Schneider was, I think, a stroke of genius (My spellchecker recognises 'Schneider'! I knew OpenOffice was better than MS Works!) and I thought the

Either way I need to get my act together and get cracking, I've had quite long enough of being broke.

I know this sounds odd but it's actually quite scary. I've never had a Proper Job before so I suppose it's about bloody time really but I hadn't thought I'd be doing it *yet*. I always had a vague plan to stay in academia till I rotted amongst the letters after my name and then jack it all in during my twilight years and go and run a street café in Paris or somesuch. Ahh well; such is life. I'm sure it will all work out okay in the end. I'll keep you all posted.

Comments & Responses

(Not as many of them as there should be, as I haven't picked up on everyone's backstory &c yet!)

Nadia – Horsewhispering? Really? That's cool. Despite having never ridden or spent much time in close proximity to one I've always loved horses, I think they're wonderful creatures. I go to the races quite a lot, actually (National Hunt as opposed to flatracing, the former being good clean fun and the latter being tantamount to horse torture) and I've always been fascinated by them. I love going to look at them in the paddock afterwards, all bulging veins and steam rising from their flanks but looking damn pleased with themselves nonetheless.

Lesley – The Pegasaur and the Elemental Dragons are seriously cool! Both beautiful pieces of artwork – I especially like the dragons, they're excellent.

In response to everything everyone said about hijab: I suspect I've rambled about this on numerous occasions in blogs and fanzines that many of you will have read, but I am absolutely firm in my belief that anyone should be able to wear whatever the hell they want, thank you very much, and it's none of my damn business – or anyone else's. I've always found it faintly amusing that if I choose to go out in a corset and enormous petticoats with eyeliner all over my face and it makes someone feel uncomfortable people find it appalling – “oh, they haven't the right! You wear whatever you like, love!” but if a Muslim woman

way they staged the ending was obvious enough without shoving it in your face – no Emcee getting carted off to a concentration camp à la Broadway, but still not so subtle that you were left under any illusion that the denizens of the Kit Kat Klub were in any way safe.

Films & TV

I went to see Pirates of the Caribbean 3 with Kari the other week and it was great fun. But then I would think that: it had Cpt. Jack Sparrow in it, being, well, Cpt. Jack Sparrow. Huzzah! I do recommend it, though, if you're someone who can cope with a film not having a huge amount of merit past Silly and Johnny Depp. And oh! Orlando Bloom learned how to act! Most disconcerting.

The only telly I've really been watching is Dr Who. The first half of the series was crap (although still good fun) but every episode since the Human Nature two-parter has been brilliant, and actually felt like Who for a change. Don't turn around, don't look away, and DON'T BLINK.

Games

After a sudden burst of enthusiasm I appear to once more be flagging from KoL, which doubtless you will all have heard about from Flick. There are Big Changes coming to the game soon, though, so I suspect I will dive back in properly in about ten day's time.

Oh God help me, I seem to have started MUDding again. There's nothing quite like spending hours on the living room floor drawing endless

chooses to go out in full burqa and it makes someone feel uncomfortable people start agreeing with them and making judgements about body language and communication and goodness knows what else. I've always thought that if someone is only capable of communicating with another using the methods **they** are used to then it's **their** problem.

Obviously it's different in the case of women being coerced into wearing it, and that I would never condone and would argue against to the best of my ability – but that's actually an entirely different issue: that's not about clothing, it's about oppression.

Perhaps I am destined to become a pop-anthropologist à la Kate Fox or something but I've long wanted to spend a day travelling around London in full burqa. Partly to see if anyone treats me any differently or if I get odd looks–and to try and make some sort of social commentary on the life of a Muslim woman who chooses to stay veiled–but also because the idea fascinates me. Imagine walking down the street and being completely anonymous: you could walk straight past your own mother and have her not recognise you. Nobody would be judging your personality on your clothes. It's an odd thought. I suppose because I dress in such an obvious, noticeable manner (lots of cleavage, high heels, over-the-top makeup, velvet and sequins and lace) the thought of blending into the background and going unseen is strange and somehow appealing. I'd hate to do it any more than occasionally, though!

...and I bid thee farewell.

I shall sign off now as I've been rambling on for quite long enough. I'm glad to have finally joined TWP, though, and I'm looking forward to the arrival of the next issue and getting to know you all better. Being as accustomed as I am to the instant gratification of online communication, of emails and bulletin boards and LJ, it's refreshing to do something like this, I think.

maps in an effort to navigate a text-only universe. Especially when you have arthritis.

Creativity

Summer is icumen in and I really should get my camera out and start taking photographs again. I got some good ones of 'the London summer' last year but I've been somewhat slack over the cooler months. God knows why, mind – if you're going to traipse around the city all day, it's infinitely nicer to do it when we're not in the throes of a heatwave!

Oooh, and I've finally got round to sorting my vast and unwieldy bead collection out, so I hope to be doing a lot more of that soon, too. If I do manage to get any beadwork done for once, pictures will follow. You Have Been Warned.

Fanac

I've been doing a decent amount of Stuff For Fandom of late. Planning for Year Of The Teledu is chugging along nicely, and I am terrified by the thought that when this is sent back to me bound in TWP the con will be long over and my hangover may even have abated.

But it's going OK, and with a bit of luck everyone will have fun. And I will never have to worry about the awful coding on the Programme Grid on the Wiki ever again.

I really should get cracking on Demeter's Daughter III if I want to have it ready in time. I may end up writing it all myself as I don't have time to chase up contributors! I do hope people don't get bored of me...