**DIARY OF AN AVATAR**

**A True Story about a Virtual World**

## March 2012

During a chattery gathering at Book Island, I edited clothing, using pictures of my real life bookshelf, while everyone bantered. Izzy wanted my book Bermuda shorts. I gave him my formal book dress.

“Hello, Izzward,” I greeted him in chat.

Izzy sounds like a goofy character from the mock rockumentary *This Is Spinal Tap*, like Nigel when he speaks at the beginning of the Stonehenge song. When Izzy talks, you feel like it’s midnight and he’s reading a ghost story in the dark. You expect demons to moan, witches to cackle, accompanied by an eerie guitar riff in the background. But Izzy isn’t talking about ghosts. He’s telling a silly joke, to see if you’re paying attention.

I had to log out for a moment. Twenty minutes later, I came on as my Griefer alt.

I sat on the arm of Izzy’s chair. Then I turned into a zebra and squashed him.

“Is Grief someone we know?” Uncle Sandor asked.

“Hello, Izzward,” I typed.

There was silence for a moment.

“Izzward?” Izzy typed back. “Lisa?”

“Good thing you spoke up or we might have banned you because of the name,” Arton said.

“Ban Grief?” I said. “But she’s my polite alt.”

## April 2012

Brokali asked if I was interested in attending a poetry and prose reading.

“Of course!” I said. And waited for five minutes for a response. “Aren’t you going to teleport me?” Still no response.

Finally I got a message from Izzy saying he was at a poetry reading.

“Yeah. Brokali told me,” I responded. “But he won’t tell me where it is.”

“That’s Brokali,” Izzy said. “He always sends me random teleports.”

“That’s funny.”

“He does it to irritate me.”

“Then it’s even funnier,” I said.

Izzy teleported me to a Victorian living room. When I got there, I offered him a teleport.

“Thanks for the teleport, Lisa, but I’m already here.”

“Just trying to irritate you,” I said.

I brought in Brad and sat on top of the chair that Izzy was sitting on. Brad was dressed exactly like me, with a huge formal book skirt. The skirt enveloped Izzy’s face.

“Sit on my face and tell me that you love me,” Izzy sang.

I sent Izzy a partnership request as Brad.

“Nice,” Izzy said. “How does Brad take rejection?”

Yet Brad never received that rejection.

When Izzy puts on a female avatar, he calls her Izzette. I created an alt named Izzette and gave her the nickname ‘Izzward’s Alt.’ She was born as a pink unicorn with a white helical horn. I went to Book Island and found Izzy.

“Hi Izzward,” I said.

“Hey. I’m a victim of identity theft.”

He was DJing and the only other person there was Scooby. Izzy called her by her real name, so I figured they had been friends for awhile. They were both dancing and I was just standing there, so I asked where the dance ball was.

“The pink one,” Izzy pointed out. “Above the dragon.”

Well, nothing had rezzed yet, so I clicked on the first ball I saw.

Then my legs and arms got cut off at the elbow. Without joints, my limbs stuck out in the shape of a star.

“What am I doing?” I asked.

“Tiny dances,” Izzy said.

Tiny dances? I guess the dance I was doing was tiny. I rotated around the dance floor like a stiff wheel, turning cartwheels through Scooby, poking the floor with the helix sticking out of my head.

“Watch out for my horn,” I said.

When everything rezzed, I saw the ball I had clicked above the dragon. ‘Tiny dances,’ was written on it. Like Izzy had said. Now it made sense. There were special dance animations for tiny animals.

Finally I saw the pink ball. Over a different dragon.

Scooby told me she’s been a family friend of Izzy’s for many years in real life.

“Really! Tell me something embarrassing about Izzy,” I beckoned Scooby. If she had any good stories, she didn’t want to share at the moment. “What’s his name in real life?” I asked.

“You haven’t told her?” Scooby said.

He paused a moment, as if he was either deciding whether he wanted to tell me, or trying to think of a good fake name.

“It’s Dracula.”

Now that’s something embarrassing.

“Are you making that up?” I asked.

“No, that’s his name,” Scooby confirmed.

“That’s a Halloween name.” Although it fit his voice perfectly. Spooky, vampire-like, with a Transylvania-like accent. “Are his parents goth?”

“His mum is a lovely woman,” Scooby said.

She said ‘mum.’ Now I want to hear her accent.

As a few more people trickled in, I recognized everyone Izzy had invited from Book Island. Everyone there was female, except Izzy.

“Is this a party of Izzy’s groupie girlfriends?” I asked.

“No, Izzy’s my dad,” Kat said. “When am I going to get a mom?”

“My alt sent him a partner request, but he hasn’t responded yet,” I said.

Icons of surprise filled the chat.

“Wedding!” Kat said.

Izzy had to let them down. “Her alt is a man.”

“Gay wedding!” I said.

Izzy invited us all to join his DJ group called ‘DJ Izzy’s Legion of the Forsaken.’ When we did, the title ‘Monkey Toucher’ appeared above our heads.

Monkey toucher? Why did Izzy select that as our group role?

I looked into the group information to find out what other titles were available. We had also been given a second title, ‘I’ve been Izzy’d.’ Very funny. It was like a test, to see if we were smart enough to look for the second title.

When I was about to leave, I told Izzy, “I think you have enough girlfriends to keep you company tonight.”

“But they’re all taken,” he said.