



# Gracies Dinnertime Theatre

*Time, Place, & Manner*

Volume 36, Issue 4

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How many of you, perhaps yesterday, today, or for the daring, *tomorrow*, have frantically scrawled out a letter proclaiming your undying love for some other human, thrown a few chocolates and maybe some flowers in a box, and placed it with sweaty hands in some safe place? How many of you have agonized over the perfect gift to express your love for your significant other? How many of you have cracked under the pressure of waiting in line for a tray of assorted chocolates with names that no one can decipher?

Let's face it. St. Valentine's Day has become a burden. If you are in fact involved in the delicate proceedings known as a "relationship," there is immense societal pressure to get your partner<sup>1</sup> a perfect, memorable gift that they will treasure forever—with the threat of a breakup looming lest you fall short. How many perfect relationships have been soured by a botched Valentine's Day? How many happy couples have been forever torn asunder by a calendar mishap? And how many people have, after not receiving a Valentine's Day gift, yelled "you said your heart was mine!" and ripped the still-beating organ from their significant other's chest?<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, the pressure to *have* a "valentine" on the day of is potent as well. What about those who have undergone recent breakups? Valentine's Day will bring them nothing but painful memories.

It cannot go on like this. We must make a change. But *what*, you might ask. Well, as is so often the case, to proceed into the future, we must first look back into the past.

Many do not realize that the Valentine's Day we celebrate today is, in fact a bastardized version of the original holiday. If you are a student of the classics, you may be familiar with the ancient Roman holiday Lupercalia. It was a more distinguished, more elegant holiday from a more civilized age.

There has been talk in recent years<sup>3</sup> of Lupercalia being some sort of pagan "sex party" where young Roman couples were brought together to "clown around." This was not in fact the case, and there is no historical precedent for such things, and it is but a product of the lurid imaginations of some Catholics in the 1700s.

In truth, Lupercalia consisted of several priests of the *Luperci* order, who would travel to the Lupercal cave, where supposedly centuries before the young Romulus and Remus had been suckled by the she-wolf. There the priests would participate in mysterious rites that involved the blood sacrifice of a goat, and feasting.

Then, thongs<sup>4</sup> of goatskin were cut and given out to the priests, who would then run through the streets of Rome completely naked<sup>5</sup> and strike those in their path with them.

You may be wondering at this point, how is it possible that Lupercalia and Valentine's Day are one and the same? One is about hitting citizens with pieces of goat, and the

1 Or partners. Imagine how much harder Valentine's Day is for polyamorous folks!

2 One, actually. No, I will not elaborate.

3 The 18<sup>th</sup> century, or thereabouts.

4 Not what you're thinking. A thin leather band, almost like a shoelace.

5 It was the Mediterranean. Also, before the Julian calendar, February was aligned slightly differently in the year.



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

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## IMAGINUM AUCTORES

**Page 1:** Matt Brooks. "Bee" and "Valentine." 2017. commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bee\_-\_The\_Noun\_Project.svg and commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Valentine\_-\_The\_Noun\_Project.svg

**Page 7:** Chordboard. "Butterfly Valentine." 2008. commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Butterfly\_Valentine.jpg. Text was added. This remix is published under a CC BY-SA 4.0 license.

**Page 9:** Doyle, Arthur Conan. "Fairies Photographed." 1920. *The Strand Magazine*. commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cottingley\_Fairies,\_page\_463,\_The\_Strand\_Magazine\_-\_1920\_-\_Vol.Jul-Dec.jpg

**Page 11:** Leys, Thomsom W. "Worker Bee." 1883. commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Worker\_bee\_•\_Fig2\_•\_p230\_•\_Brett%27s\_Colonists%27\_Guide\_1883.tif

**Page 12:** Rebecca Fabbri, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "American Pika Valentine's Day Card." 2022. commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:American\_Pika\_Valentine%27s\_Day\_Card\_(51882062834).jpg

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other is about experiencing a intense feeling of panic on February 13<sup>th</sup> when you have not yet gotten your significant other a gift. Fear not, gentle readers. There is more to Lupercalia.<sup>6</sup>

Those struck with the thongs would, of course, become fertile, so women would step out into the streets to have their bellies struck, and children would hold out their hands to be struck so they might assist in delivery.

Why do you need to know all this, you might ask? Well, I would like to propose and alternative to the chalky candy hearts, heartfelt cards and potential breakup fuel—RIT's very own Lupercalia! But not just the old classic. We have to reboot it for today's modern world! Presenting: the new and improved Lupercalia!

The sacrifice of the goat would take place in a place where many began their RIT years—Sol's Underground. The "priests" would then feast on whatever expired popsicles are still left in that forsaken freezer, mixed with the goat entrails of course, then proceed to the Quarter Mile, where they would do just as the Romans did.<sup>7</sup>

The biggest hurdle, I think, is that pregnancy and child delivery are not necessarily desired by the denizens of RIT. I suggest that instead, you receive a special reward for being hit, depending on your major; engineers are absolved of any guilt around contributions to war crimes, CS majors receive Genshin Impact Primogems, and liberal arts majors get peremptory SNAP benefits for after graduation.

The need for a holiday—not just for those happy, perfect couples, but for the rest of us, the forgetful boyfriends, the incels, the entire aro-ace community—is even more pressing in these ever-divisive times. I have created a PawPrints petition to officially replace Valentine's with Lupercalia at RIT.<sup>8</sup> Join the movement! Down with Valentine's Day! Embrace the insanity of Lupercalia!



<sup>6</sup> You may also be wondering, "why did I just read this paragraph?" It serves no purpose except to make this article puffier. I really need some copy editing.

<sup>7</sup> This could be a funding opportunity for RIT! Similar to getting buildings named after them, rich people could pay for the honor of running down the Quarter Mile in the nude.\*

\* Of course, running down the Quarter Mile naked would be out of the question—in Rochester, it's far too cold in February. Therefore, I suggest they wear hats.

<sup>8</sup> Editor's note: this is real. See [pawprints2.rit.edu/?petition=4948](http://pawprints2.rit.edu/?petition=4948).



# Neighborhood Watch Issues a

## LEVEL-RED ALERT for Valentine's Day Activity

-by guest Leslie Greenwood, EiC of the Monroe Maverick

The Neighborhood Watch has issued an emergency Valentine's Day advisory after detecting a sharp uptick in what officials have described as "romantically motivated public disturbances."

According to reports, the first warning signs appeared when individuals began using pet names in public that sounded less like affection and more like a concussion symptom. Names such as "Snuggle Muffin" and "Wittle Boo Bear" were overheard this week at Wegmans, prompting three shoppers to abandon their carts and one employee to request a department change to the bottle return room, "where tenderness goes to die quietly."

Public Safety and Residence Life at RIT have both flagged large plush contraband as a growing spatial hazard. One dorm room reported a teddy bear so large it now qualifies as a fourth roommate, and has better emotional availability than two of the actual residents. Fire officials have confirmed the bear cannot legally exit through standard doorways and is considered "structural."

Several local restaurants have enacted what economists are calling "Candle-Based Price Inflation," in which the presence of a tealight candle automatically increases the price of pasta by 214%. One diner described paying \$67 for "noodles in sauce that had the taste of responsibility." When asked if the meal was worth it, they replied, "we made eye contact over tiramisu, so now we have to get married or legally dissolve this dessert."

Neighborhood Watch volunteers are also monitoring suspicious date night locations, including:

- Target after 9 PM, due to lighting and emotionally unavailable shoppers.
- The campus laundry room; nothing says love like arguing over whose socks these are.
- A car parked behind a snowbank for privacy, which officials confirm is "never for privacy."

In a separate but related development, greeting card companies have reported record profits after successfully convincing the public that feelings must be laminated and rhyming to be valid. "If people expressed affection spontaneously in March," one executive said, "the second quarter stock price would collapse."

As a reminder, if you witness excessive cuddling, desperate poetry, or a proposal staged during a fire alarm, do not approach. Maintain eye contact with a neutral object (a parking meter works well) and back away slowly.

Neighborhood Watch reminds the community: love is patient, love is kind, and love doesn't need to be 6'4" and made of polyester. ☺

*Do you have a story that the weekly Neighborhood Watch column should inform RIT about? Email it to us at [gdtneighborhoodwatch@gmail.com](mailto:gdtneighborhoodwatch@gmail.com)! All submissions will be kept anonymous. We value our whistleblowers!*



The Monroe Maverick is a new student-run newspaper at Monroe Community College. MCC recently shut down their official student-run newspaper, *The Monroe Doctrine*, and radio station, WMCC. GDT is proud to support independent media.

Support The Monroe Maverick on their Substack!



# Two Watch From the Cuckold's Nest

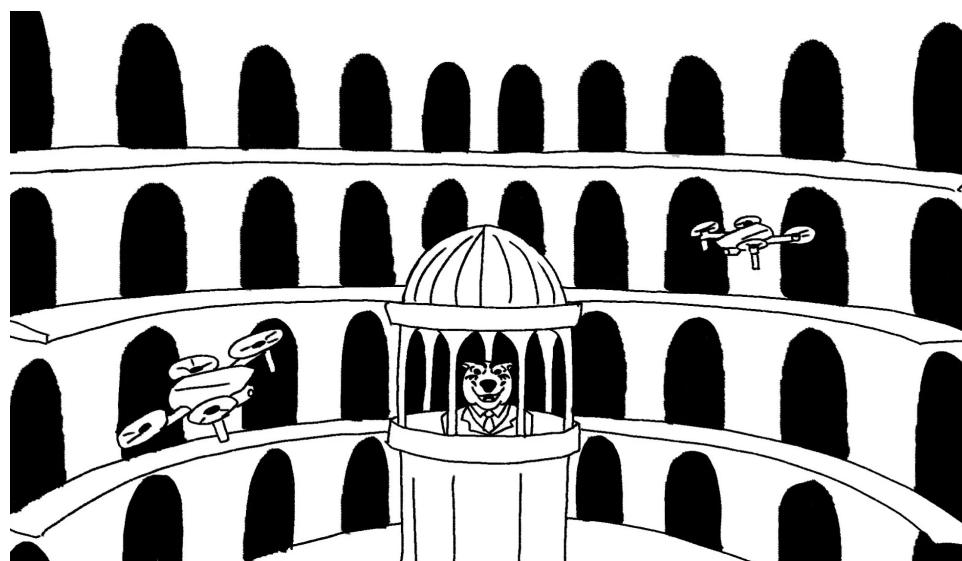
-by F.F. A.J. Money

A frequent concern that has been raised regarding RIT's campus is the lack of housing. While the academic side receives new buildings, such as the Performing Arts Center, the dorms undergo renovations and students turn to private housing to alleviate demand. And with the national housing crisis, those seeking non-RIT-related housing may face further issues. RIT must face this burgeoning issue head-on, which may provide other benefits through the use of innovative strategies.

## THE PANOPTICUCK

In the late 18th century, utilitarian thinker Jeremy Bentham conceptualized the panopticon, a hypothetical prison design. Said design would allow a single prison guard to observe any cell within the prison. Although a single guard may not observe all cells at once, the inmates would not be able to tell exactly when and if they are being watched at any moment, promoting self-regulating behavior. While this was initially to be applied to prisons, this may also be applied to hospitals, factories, schools, and most applicable here, dorms.

The original concept used a rotunda, but modern architecture need not be restricted by such geometry. Through a series of hidden mirrors, cameras, sightlines, and more, a dorm may be constructed such that all behavior may be observed from a single room, hereby referred to as the "Box Seat." Said room should be required to be manned by two overseers at all times, provided with a variety of "snacks" and other goods as support.



## WHO HECKLES THE HECKLERS?

Concerns may be raised that such a structure is an invasion of privacy and a violation of human rights. One may raise the point that this may disrupt one common college occurrence: coitus. Or for those that lack a thesaurus, sexual intercourse. And for those who are lacking in vocabulary, sex. And for those who don't know what sex is, ask your parents, honestly that fact is more concerning. Some portion of the population may propose that non-reproductive procreation should occur in private, witnessed by the two (or more) participants only.

*Au contraire*, the presence of observers may serve as a boon. It is known that at RIT and elsewhere that knowledge of intimate anatomy is often inadequate, see for example, the rationale behind I ❤️ Female Orgasm and the identification of the vulva. Through the long-term gathering of visual data, the overseers may assist the participants.

The proposed format for such assistance is simple. In 1975, Jim Henson released the pilot *The Muppet Show: Sex and Violence*. We will be ignoring the latter concept currently to focus on the former. Within this pilot was the first appearance of two characters: Statler and Waldorf. In *The Muppet Show*, Statler and Waldorf take on the roles of hecklers, jeering at the performances of the Muppets. This is often in the form of various quips and wordplay, the two laughing at their own commentary.

In addition to the observation devices used to view each cell dormroom, there will be loudspeakers and other auditory means to communicate with the lovemakers. The framing of this as humor will be used to relieve tension. Via the constructive criticism of the overseers in the form of various jokes and gags, the participants may be instructed on how to perfect their craft. An example:



S: "I think I've lost the plot."

W: "You're not the only one losing things, he lost the clitoris!"

Both: "Do-ho-ho-ho-hoh!"

The above can communicate the importance of knowing heterogeneous zones between partners. Other challenges will involve determining location, budget, and the name of the building, but are expected to be relatively minor. More important will be the finding of a pair of old men made of felt in a vaguely homoerotic relationship.

Through the use of these innovative techniques, RIT can ensure both safety and high-quality copulation. Sex education does not end in high school. It is said that humor is the best medicine, and although it may not treat syphilis, it may help treat poorly going college hookups.

"Y'know what the best part of that article was?"

"What?"

"When it ended!"

"Do-ho-ho-ho-hoh!"



## Definitions

*-by the denizens of the GDT discord*

Condomplation – do I *really* need to use protection?

Englittification – the continued phenomenon of adding edible glitter to things that shouldn't have edible glitter in them.

Insanity – Gracies Dinnertime Theatre.

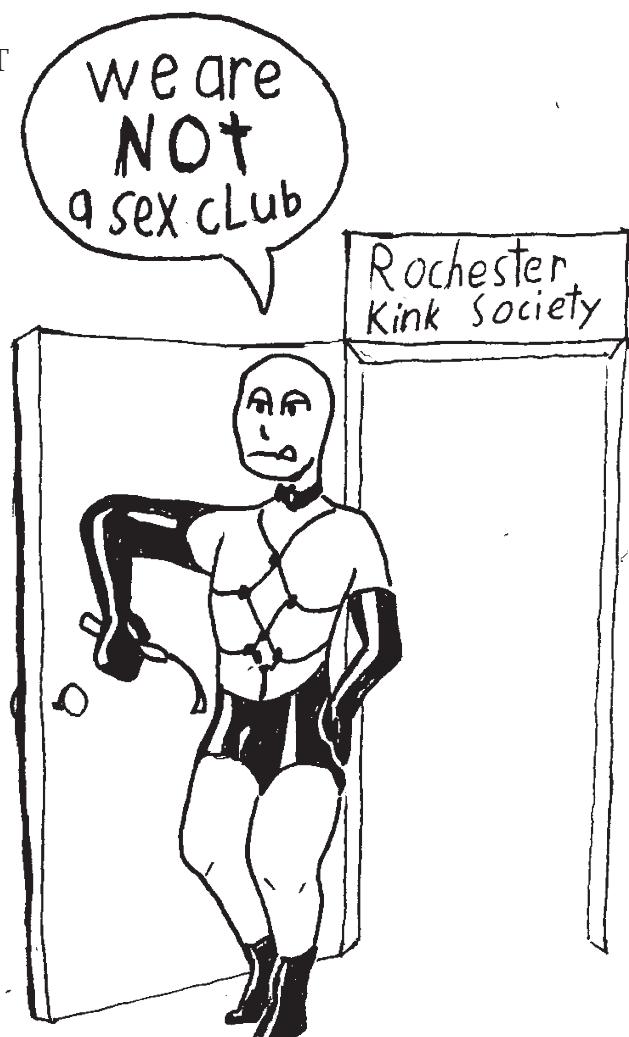
Mucb – when you are so overcome with joy that you start to blubber. Usage: "*I lurve it so mucb.*"

Nefarious cuddling – sex.

Post-nut clarity – yes, I do.

Proactive protectionism – better safe than scummy.

Sexagram – a geometric shape, geographically constrained to Rome and some isolated refugia in Romania. It is a six-sided polygon consisting to two thruples.





# Thereby Hangs a Tail

-by Titty\_Cocker\_4

**Creator(s) Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings,** Ritchie (RIT)/Reader, Gracie's (RIT Dining), Gracies (Dinnertime Theatre), Ritchie/Balloon Ritchie (RIT), You Become Ritchie Halfway Through, Non-human Genitalia, But Only Implied, Bad Flirting, Satire, Look Away Before You Regret It

**Editor's note:** what happens when you give seventeen RIT students sixty seconds each to write a rom com with no theme? Ritchie smut. You get Ritchie smut.

One day, when I was walking to my daily visit to eat a single banana at Gracie's, I saw you. Your eyes immediately stood out. A rush of emotions immediately swelled within the depths of my soul. I am writing this letter to you, my love. My heart. You were shoving six to twelve apples and oranges in your backpack. I respected your dedication to stealing from our worst dining hall. You were really orange with black stripes and oh my god you were Ritchie. The fucking tiger. Holy shit.

I took a whiff of your fur as you passed by, you smelled just like a sweaty hockey jersey. The musk of old non-cotton fabric and soiled jock strap was intoxicating.

I approached, breathless, as your scrumptious scent scorched my sclera. I caressed your muscular orange arm—

"Hey there, big boy~" I breathed into your ear. You flinched and pull back as I giggle mischievously. "Your tail is sooooooo long," I said seductively. "Besides balance, what else can it do for you?" I winked.

He pounced on me, pinning me to the wall. "I'll give you some of that RIT trademarked spirit." I immediately got a boner and my dick exploded. "That's okay, that means more holes," Ritchie said sexily.

Slutily Ritchie slid their salient features into your sides.

You feel your new holes growing larger and larger, already ready for the long night ahead of you with Ritchie. Well the night isn't the only thing that's going to be large. There will, in fact be a barge.

Gaston bursts through the door, and you gasp. Your weak heart feels like it's going to give out, having all this fresh, juicy meat around. You realize that one thing is missing, though. This could be paradise, a paradise on earth, the life within my veins.

I'm in love—I can't believe it. For the first time in my 9,000,000 year life, I have found love in this fluffy, sexy soul. I close my eyes and purse my lips and—

Sometimes all I can think about is Balloon Ritchie. The way his latex curves in those magnificent protrusions. Just imagine the endurance of a being with *that many phallic objects*.

AWOOGA!!! There he is!! Jaw drops, eyes pop out of sockets, etc etc etc.

My heart against yours, your fluids against mine, I am in ecstasy, or that might just be the ecstasy. ■■■



Roarie and Ritchie, at it again.

# Does the TSA Like You?

-by Rock Goblin

- 1) Do you have tits?**
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  
- 2) Do you have an ass?**
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  
- 3) Do you have anything potentially dangerous on you?**
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Can I have my sandwich back?
  
- 4) Did you take your shoes off?**
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) It has peppers, salami, and mayo
  
- 5) Did you remove your laptop from your bag?**
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Sandwich
  
- 6) Do you have any primary or secondary sex characteristics?**
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) It's my constitutional right to get my sandwich back
  
- 7) Are you wearing a shirt/top?**
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Sandwich please
  
- 8) Are you wearing pants?**
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) My Sandwich....
  
- 9) Will you wear pants?**
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Chips?
  
- 10) Are you running late for your plane?**
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Shit.



If you have answered **any** of these questions, congratulations! The TSA wants to **molest** you pat you down, and propose to you! Congratulations on finding a valentine! 🌹

**Have your own story, poetry, or art? SUBMIT!**

**graciesdinnertimetheatre@gmail.com**

# Ask Susan

~~~~~

Dear Susan,

How many times can me and my roommate fake propose for personal gain before people think we're actually lovers? We are not romantically interested in each other at all but we want attention and free cake at restaurants.



- Scam Hopeful

Dear Scam Hopeful,

I pose a question: does it even matter? I'm sure many people perceive my best friend and I to be lovers (despite neither of us having an interest in romance). Though maybe that's due to the whole kissing each other thing. I digress. I'm personally not particularly upset by those assumptions, but I know others might. If that's your case, I'd say an unlimited amount of times, if you're careful with it. Maybe only once on campus. If you do it at different restaurants and public places, you should be able to get away with it frequently. Perhaps invest in costumes.

-Susan

Dear Susan,

Will you be my valentine...? 😊😊😊

- Beautiful and Intimidating Horse

NEIGHHHH!!!!!!

-Susan

Susan, I'm starting to fall in love with the demon that restrains me to my bed every morning when I wake up. How do I confess my feelings to her?

- Bee Dessem

Dear Bee,

Wow Bee! Sure seems like someone is falling in love with the action, not the person- are you sure you're falling in love with 'your' demon, or are you in love with being restrained? There's a lot of inner thought to unpack here... Much more than I can resolve right now. But I think objective numero uno for you should be moving on from wasting time with the demon every morning- find someone who can restrain you AND love you. 🚫

-Susan



Do you need advice? Have burning questions?  
Susan is here — maybe to help!

Scan the QR code to ask! It's all anonymous. 😊



# Fey Denizen



*They exist. I know they do. I've seen proof of their presence, lurking in the kitchen from time to time. Have I seen them? Of course not. They don't like being seen. But their handiwork is clearly visible in the morning. They are the sneaky, the mischievous, and the Chaotic Good that visit in the dead of night.*

— Sam W, Head Researcher

For any of you who are well-read in *Gracies Dinnertime Theatre* lore, this logo may seem familiar. Yes, it's a special edition of the Fey Denizen! I bet you thought we were dead. That all our Fey lore was exhausted. That we were forcibly silenced by malevolent spirits, seeking to blind any prying eyes and shut any blabbing mouths. That the researchers left for Nebraska and just never came back. We have returned, triumphantly, in a blaze of lore-laden glory, to spread the knowledge of the Fae once again.

This week is a long one. Our lead researcher, through a series of unfortunate events, had three consecutive run-ins with the aftermath of Dish Faeries.

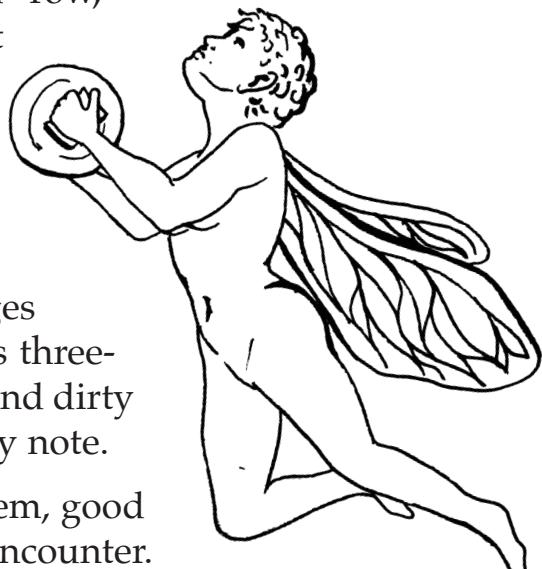
Dish Faeries are fickle creatures. Like guardian angels, they show up in times of dire need. Unlike guardian angels, they have quick tempers and a particularly petty attitude. As our head researcher noted, they are an unseen force appearing when needed—namely, when the dishes in your sink have remained unwashed and neglected for too many days. Driven by a primal urge to restore order to overwhelmed kitchens, they quickly get to work.

There's the Scraping Division, who silently push food into the compost bin; the Suds Division, who fashion bubbles with their tiny hands like balloon animals and float them through the air; the Soaping Division, who collect those bubbles and deposit them on the dirty plates and cups; the Scrubbing Division, who clean the dishes with miniature sponges, and the Spraying Division, who rinse the dishes and put them in the drying rack, delicate beating wings. where they are promptly air-dried by hundreds of Each unit works like a well-oiled machine, any human could; we imagine it's quite a beautiful sight.

Take advantage of them, however, and it all leaving dishes for them to do is paramount visits will tick them off. After two visits in they're annoyed. And after three visits in a row, it's best to do the dishes promptly for the rest of the month lest you wish to suffer their wrath. I once witnessed the aftermath of a four-in-a-row visitation event, which involved dishware strewn over the kitchen and lounge, dish soap slicking the floors, dirty pots and pans piled in front of the offenders' doors, and vulgar messages written on the fridge in ketchup. Our head researcher's three-in-a-row event was marked by the faeries mixing clean and dirty dishes in the washing machine, and an extremely snarky note.

If you manage to take them by surprise and confront them, good luck. Dish Faeries are unlike any other Fey you may encounter. For example, they have evolved to completely circumvent the standard restriction on Fey—that they are forced to tell the truth—because of their continued exposure to lies. Furthermore, over the last few decades, some Dish Faeries

turns on its head. Intentionally to war. And, repeated a row,



(most of them coming from the scrubbing division) have developed a resistance to iron, a consequence of the increased prevalence of induction-compatible pots and pans.<sup>1</sup>

As always, though, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. As long as you do your dishes promptly, they may never visit. And, if they do, make sure to do the rest so they don't have to return. Like anything, Dish Faeries can be helpful in moderation. But don't *ever* get into the situation where they need to visit more than twice in a row. ■■■

<sup>1</sup> Based on their description, Dish Faeries are clearly a type of household fae...something like a Hob, Nisse, or Brownie. Since they are focusing exclusively on cleaning dishes, they are probably a type of Brownie because they are often associated with sources of water like pools, rivers, etc. The identification is further strengthened because Brownies do not have the same problem with exposure to iron as other fae species. If toilets and showers are not being cleaned as well, the fixation on dishes might be because the Dish Faeries are interpreting the food scraps on the plates as what the home owners are leaving out for them—like when you leave cookies and milk for Santa (also a type of fae). The obsessive drive to bring order to chaos is also a trait broadly seen among the Good Folk. Rice (or wheat) is thrown at weddings to trigger mischievous fae's OCD. They simply can't resist counting the seeds, and the newly married couple is able to flee the scene and start a new household free of malicious interference from the fae. At least for a time. -Professor Sean T. Hammond, RIT alumnus and wise (and wizened) Fey Denizen archivist.



## Aromantic and Asexual Corner

While doing some field research (read: talking to my friends about) for this Valentine's Day-themed issue, I discovered that aromantic spectrum awareness week starts the very next day. So for any *GDT* readers who need a break from all the love talk, here's a corner to take refuge in. Valentine's Day isn't mandatory after all.

To really make our aromantic and/or asexual readers feel at home I've also included a wonderfully rendered aroace flag down below:

**O R A N G E  
Y E L L O W  
W H I T E  
S K Y B L U E  
N A V Y**

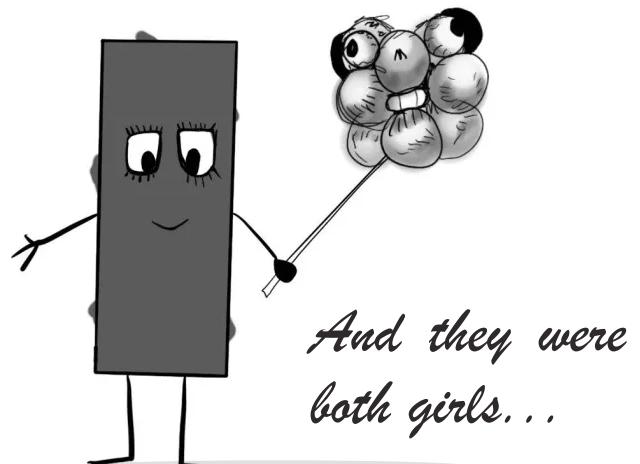
**V  
A  
L  
E  
N  
T  
I  
N  
E**

And for the aro/aces that do still date people, here's my favorite queer couple to keep you company. May your relationships be as unconventional and beautiful as Richel the Brick and Balloon Ritchie. ■■■

-by Confessional

**A R E J U S T  
S O P T I O N A L Y O U K N O W**

What, you thought we could print in color? Oops. Anyway, for real this time, Valentine's Day has taken over campus. The expectations around relationships, which are bad enough the other 364 days a year, multiply at an alarming rate. It can feel suffocating to someone less interested in dating or sex. This is a reminder to not let the societal messages that "you can't be happy without a partner" get to you. Focus on all of those sweet, sweet deals on candy instead!



# Avoidant

-by Dedusmuln



The last time I started flirting with a guy, I really tried to think it through. I didn't want to lead him on because I knew I had issues that might get in the way of a relationship. You see, almost every relationship I had been in before then had been ended because I didn't want to make things official—I always thought that I did, being someone's boyfriend sounded appealing at first—but whenever I got close to that title, I broke things off.

This time, I thought about my issues, but put them to the side, which was a mistake. The moment after I kissed him, I felt a looming sense of dread, which escalated to an anxiety attack a few hours later. All we had done was kiss, but my mind was flashing forwards to me having to go out with him, having to make time to be with him, having to live with him—and it made me terrified. I couldn't stop shaking and nearly threw up. I ended up following my gut feelings, and broke things off with him the very same night.

After this, I started wondering about something I had thought about after all my other breakups: will I ever be able to love anyone?

It's a heavy question for an eighteen-year-old to handle. Of course, I love my family and my best friend but finding a partner—someone to live with and spend the rest of my days around—it makes me feel sick. I've always been an extremely independent person, and to me, centering my life around some guy feels like I would be stripping away all my free time and independence for no good reason. Dating feels like a chore to me; you have to spend time hanging out, spend money on each other, talk to each other practically every five minutes, meanwhile I barely have enough social battery to go to classes every day.

I had learned about avoidant attachment<sup>1</sup> in my psychology classes, and knew that attachment styles affected future relationships, but I never thought about it as something that I would relate to. I had two loving parents who gave me plenty of attention. Why would my attachment be anything but secure? I guess sometimes, people don't turn out right, no matter the upbringing, because when I started looking into avoidant attachment again, I found that it perfectly described what I was going through. The need to have distance, the sudden and random feeling of disgust, the relief after breaking things off; it was all matching up.

Anyone can find love if they try hard enough. There are probably thousands of stories on social media of people with avoidant attachment making it work, and even more about people with autism. I know I probably could too. But to go through that needle in a haystack search, to spend time working on my attachment issues, and most importantly, to sacrifice even the tiniest bit of my independence for another person... it doesn't seem worth it.

I'm okay with that though.

Romance sounds fun, but the little tastes I've been given have been bittersweet, and I don't expect them to get better. No matter how many wholesome love stories or how much idealistic fanfiction I read, it won't change the discomfort that relationships bring me. But I don't need romance to be happy. When I move to a new city, when I get my own apartment, when I finally become a teacher, all those experiences and adventures will be mine, solely mine, and that will make them all the more special. ■■

<sup>1</sup> Editor's note for those not in psychology: 'attachment styles' are names for the four main behavioral patterns in relationships, which can be 'secure' or 'insecure' (anxious, avoidant, or disorganized). People with avoidant attachment can be outgoing, independent, or have high self-esteem but reject deeper relationships. Avoidant Personality Disorder (AvPD) is a different, more severe clinical diagnosis where people have intense feelings of shame and are often socially isolated.



## My Body is a Temple (After a Found Diary)

*-by Franklin Scharf*

Were my mind a palace,  
The cobblestones would be cracked.  
A garden once full of life  
Lies trampled and withered.  
The moat runs dry, the  
Courtyard filled with trash.  
I'm left somewhere in the middle,  
Clutching this single thought in my  
hands:

Who did this? or rather,  
Did I do this?  
Was my palace so awful  
That the visitors saw fit to  
Batter the walls,  
Crush the plants,  
Bail out the moat,  
And leave behind mere garbage?

Dear Issaq.  
Dearest Issaq.  
I can finally say that I  
Won the "I love you more" contest.  
So why does it feel like I've  
Lost so much?



You make my heart go  
"BLEAT BLEAT." 

to:  
you

from:  
GDT



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