

Having seen the peoples reaction, Knows-Nothing got a grip on himself. "No one is going to listen to a raving lunatic," he said, "maybe I can explain to them the **Horrible Truth** calmly. I'll use some graphs and charts and a bullet point list of facts. No one would deny actual evidence."

Knows-Nothing set up a booth in the village square, and asked people as they passed: "Hello, sir. Are you aware of the **Horrible Truth**? Excuse me, ma'am! Have you seen the recent studies about the **Horrible Truth**? I'm sure if you reviewed the information, you would find..." Again, he was greatly ignored. That is, until he was told to move along by one of the elders. He was making it difficult for others to chase green butterflies.

No one would listen to anything Knows-Nothing said, despite the fact that he had seen the **Horrible Truth** which was far more horrible than he could even understand. Knows-Nothing knew one thing, if the people weren't prepared for the **Horrible Truth**, it would surely destroy them all. "I need to keep telling them! They must listen, whether they want to or not!" And he stormed into town once more.

"You listen here, you butterfly-chasing morons! I have seen the **Horrible Truth** he yelled, "And if you stupid assholes don't do something about it, the **Horrible Truth** is going to kill us all! Now, you better listen up!"

The people of the village looked up at Knows-Nothing in shock at the sudden outburst. "Excuse me." A nearby elder approached, "All this talk about the **Horrible Truth** got me thinking..." he paused. "And I think we're going to have to ask you to leave, you're being an awful downer."

Defeated, Knows-Nothing walked away, head hung. He knew about the **Horrible Truth** yet his words were ignored or misunderstood. He looked over his shoulder towards his old village, and he could hear the cries of devastation as they pealed through the trees as the **Horrible Truth** consumed them all.

As he looked on, an old sage named "Knows-A-Thing-Or-Two" happened to pass. As Knows-Nothing cast his eye upon him, he felt the need to warn the old man to avoid that village at all costs, as there lies the **Horrible Truth** but, by the look in the old sage's face, Knows-Nothing knew that he was well aware. He stopped his words at the thought.

They looked at each other in silence and nodded.

~ Cuddfish of the Infinite Regress

The Strange Times

This morning I looked out my window and I saw an unsettling and surreal painting sprawling out to the edge of the sunrise.

Jedi and zombies, vampires and ninjas, cat suits and kings, robots and chameleons, prophets and the profane, and everybody's together, eyes match forward, getting on the train.

We call it the **Strange Times**.
This is the state of modern living.

We live in a world way weirder than any realm any explorer could ever hope to map. This is a world where your nervous system, tangled with fractals that are creeping like vines, extends its tendrils into the modern jungle.

Rule 34: if it exists, there is pornography involving it. There are lollipops with bugs in them. People get surgery to look exactly like Barbie Dolls. There are humans that have become lizards and tigers. The guys in suits have all become cyborgs. Children don't play Cowboys and Indians anymore, now they play **Self Aware Artificial Intelligence** versus the **BENEVOLENT PLUTOCRACY**.

It's the **Strange Times** and every human being -- even the boring ones -- is unspeakably, unknowably **weird**. Everybody used to be into the same stuff, you know?

Everybody was at cocktail hour, everybody was into the Beatles, everybody was bathing together in the mainstream. But something happened as the stream got quicker, it forked out into a million little tributaries. The mainstream isn't a river anymore, it's an aqueduct and a sewer all at the same time. It's underneath us, always moving, carrying along all these images and symbols and the familiar sound of the ocean. Ideas bump into each other, and sometimes they STICK, and that's how we get things like a music gadget you can masturbate with, or Japanese game shows dubbed with slapstick comedy banter. It's not because these things are good ideas in of themselves, it's because the mainstream keeps juxtaposing these bits of shrapnel in new ways. It's all being churned up, and the whirlpool keeps getting faster.



Nothing has prepared us for the Strange Times

If you think you can study history and make some educated guess at what's going to happen next, you're dead wrong. Yeah humans are still humans: irrational poop-flinging apes. When you zoom out, they're not individual drops of water, they're the swell and pulse of a wild ocean. That hasn't changed in six thousand years. But these times are different. There is wholesome sex in bathrooms and righteous violence in the high schools. Kingdoms make war upon each other not by sacking cities, but by cutting deep sea internet cables. Super-memes collide and bounce off each other like sumo wrestlers, every single cell in their bloated bodies contains a lonely and confused human being. Our language is not evolving quick enough to keep pace. Words like "Good", "Evil", "Know", "Learn", and "To Be" are woefully inadequate to describe the modern world. These are the Dangers of Modern Living.

Chasing Green Butterflies



Many many years ago there lived a man named "Knows-Nothing."

Knows-Nothing lived in a large but sheltered village, whose name has long been forgotten. What is known, according to the tales, is that the people of this village practiced a very peculiar set of customs. All their days were spent chasing green butterflies.

Knows-Nothing was named such simply because the other villagers felt it described him so perfectly. To some regards that description may have had a degree of truthfulness, but one thing was certain: he knew nothing of chasing green butterflies. But then again, what else is there, right?

One summer afternoon, while Knows-Nothing walked the nearby wood, he came across a **Horrible Truth**. It was said that what Knows-Nothing saw was, indeed, so horrible that it caused him to lose consciousness for three days and two nights.

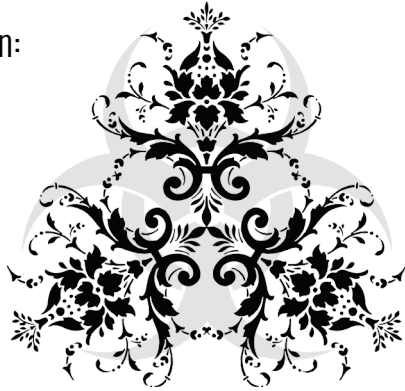
Knows-Nothing awoke in a daze. Thinking it all a dream, he was maddened once again upon seeing the **Horrible Truth** lying there beside him. The **Horrible Truth** was real. "The village must be warned!" he said to himself, as he gathered his sanity and ran back to town.

Knows-Nothing arrived in a blaze, hollering as loud as he could, "I have seen the **Horrible Truth**!" Running and yelling, he made his way through the village. "The **Horrible Truth** is out there!" He bellowed at the top of his lungs. However, no one payed him any attention, and they all went on blissfully chasing green butterflies. Perceiving him a fool, no one could be bothered to listen.

THE THREE STRENGTHS

There are three strengths we call upon:

ANGER
OBSTINANCE
and
DENIAL



Anger gives us the strength to act. It makes our bodies strong and our words hard. **Anger** protects us from pain, and from embarrassment. But **Anger** can also be **Rage** which has no finesse. **Anger** does not differentiate between friend and foe, does not understand shades of gray or degrees of wrongdoing. **Anger** is a hammer. Sometimes, a hammer is the right tool for the job.

Obstinance gives us the strength to endure. It makes us stand our ground when others would sway us. **Obstinance** gives us roots to weather the storm. But **Obstinance** can also be **Stubbornness**, which does not know how to stop when it's already won. **Obstinance** shuts its eyes to the temptations of the world, and in so doing loses sight of alternatives. **Obstinance** is a stone. Sometimes, a stone is the right tool for the job.

Denial gives us the secret strength to ignore the two options laid out before us, and to find **The Third Path**.

When we find that path, we are **Free**.

We spent thousands of years living in caves, working the fire and the rock. Then we caught the **CITY VIRUS**, and the city spirit used us to build hundreds of temples. We spent generations in the sun, tilling the fields for the Nobles. Then we fled into darkness of the factories, the air choked with the din of industry. In hindsight, it seemed to happen in a predictable way. Thesis, antithesis, synthesis. Build, destroy. Sunrise, sunset. Now we're in the world that doesn't sleep. If it's light here, it's dark somewhere else, like a snake biting its tail. People on the other side of the world are your neighbors, but there is an interminable distance between you and the guy next door (who you've never actually met). You see them every day, but the people on the train will remain strangers, and stranger still.

Odd juxtapositions are the sign of the **Strange Times**. Comedians are doing impressions of the King. The Catholic Pope looks just like Emperor Palpatine from **STAR WARS**, and then retires and is replaced by an Argentinian who thinks maybe atheists and gays aren't so bad after all. We sit in the dark around a flickering campfire and listen to the news man tell us stories about the Dangers of Modern Living. The news man knows that when you juxtapose an image with the story, it creates a new meaning which is somewhere in between the ear and the eye. And if we zoom out a tiny bit, the story is juxtaposed with the house that the TV is in. And if we zoom out, that house is inside your head, next to all these other symbols and squiggles and values.

And then at some point,
someone thinks

it's sexy
to dress up like a
cartoon
cat.



Nobody's prepared us for the *Strange Times*, and there are literally billions of humans that can't cope with it. They could deal with being serfs, they could deal with being soldiers, those are simple lives with simple choices. Now it's come time to make a new story for themselves by assembling all these weird symbols into a lifestyle, a personality, a set of values. And they just don't know how to do it. They look to culture to get clues for how to swim and be happy and break even in this weird world, and all they see are porn models and ninja turtles and humane terrorism and the extreme left and the extreme right and nothing is centered.

If it was as simple as dealing with the sun and the crops, however hard that might be, people would pull through and maintain. But there are a million choices and complexities and nuances and shrapnel flying at you like throwing knives and pillow fights and semen and banana cream pies.



We think it's best to laugh.

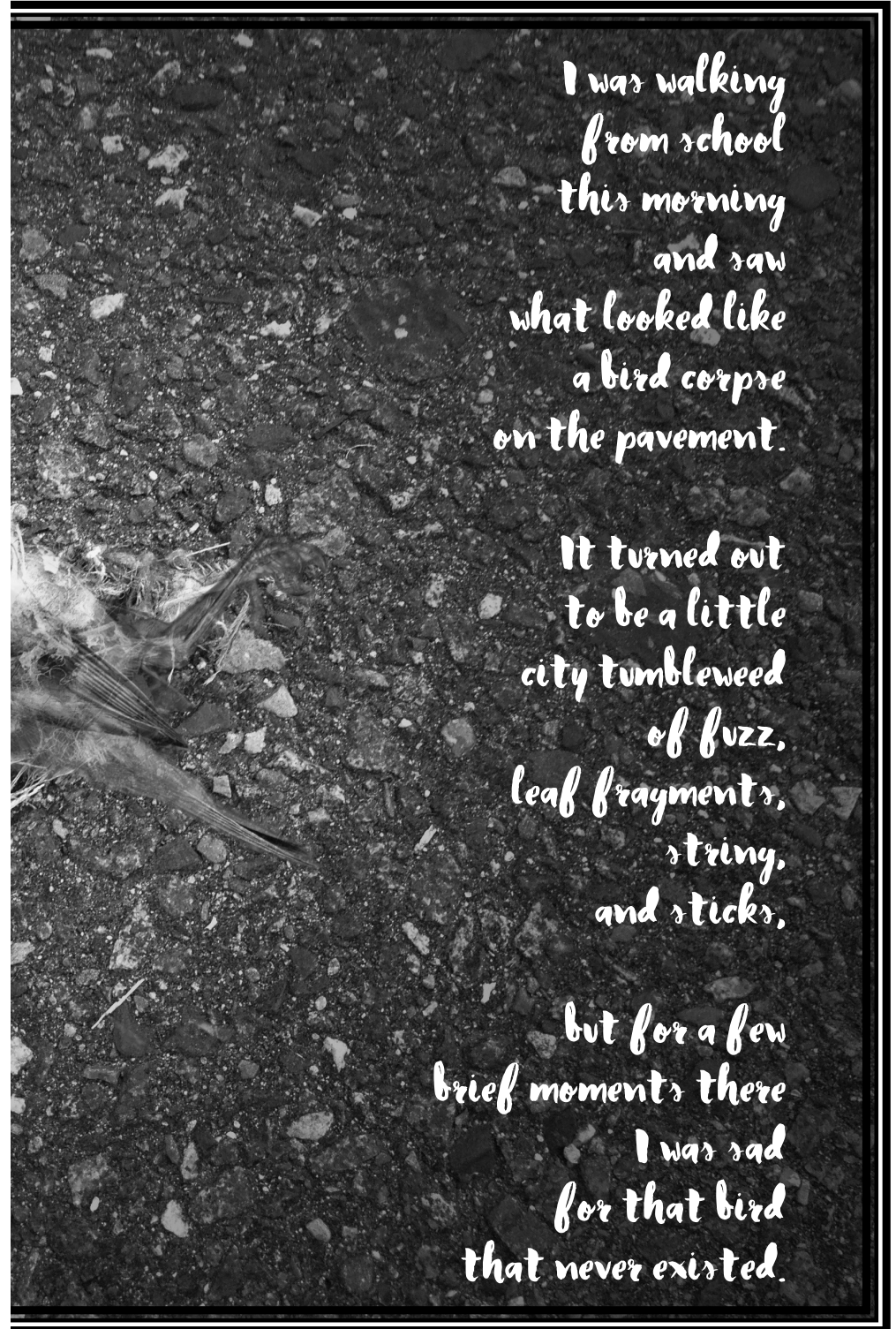
Professor Cramulus



I was walking
from school
this morning
and saw
what looked like
a bird corpse
on the pavement.

It turned out
to be a little
city tumbleweed
of fuzz,
leaf fragments,
string,
and sticks,

but for a few
brief moments there
I was sad
for that bird
that never existed.





the
Bird
that
Wasn't

= ON OCCULTISM =

Magicians, especially since the Gnostic and the Quabala influences, have sought higher consciousness through assimilation and control of universal opposites-- good/evil, positive/negative, male/female, etc. But due to the steadfast pomposity of ritualism inherited from the ancient methods of the shaman, occultists have been blinded to what is perhaps the two most important pairs of apparent or earth-plane opposites: **ORDER/DISORDER** and **SERIOUS/HUMOROUS**.

Magicians, and their progeny the scientists, have always taken themselves and their subject in an orderly and sober manner, thereby disregarding an essential metaphysical balance. When magicians learn to approach philosophy as a malleable art instead of an immutable Truth, and learn to appreciate the absurdity of man's endeavors, then they will be able to pursue their art with a lighter heart, and perhaps gain a clearer understanding of it, and therefore gain more effective magic.

CHAOS IS ENERGY.

To choose order over disorder, or disorder over order, is to accept a trip composed of both the creative and the destructive. But to choose the creative over the destructive is an all-creative trip composed of both order and disorder. To accomplish this, one need only accept creative disorder along with, and equal to, creative order, and also willing to reject destructive order as an undesirable equal to destructive disorder.

The Modern Witch's Dilemma

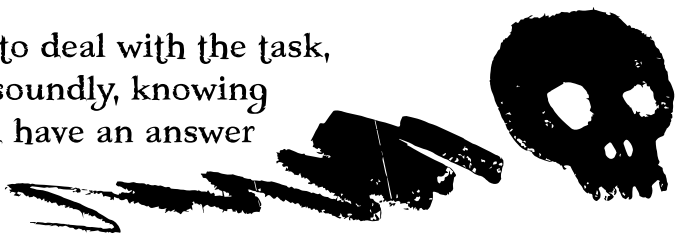


I summoned Dr. Who once.

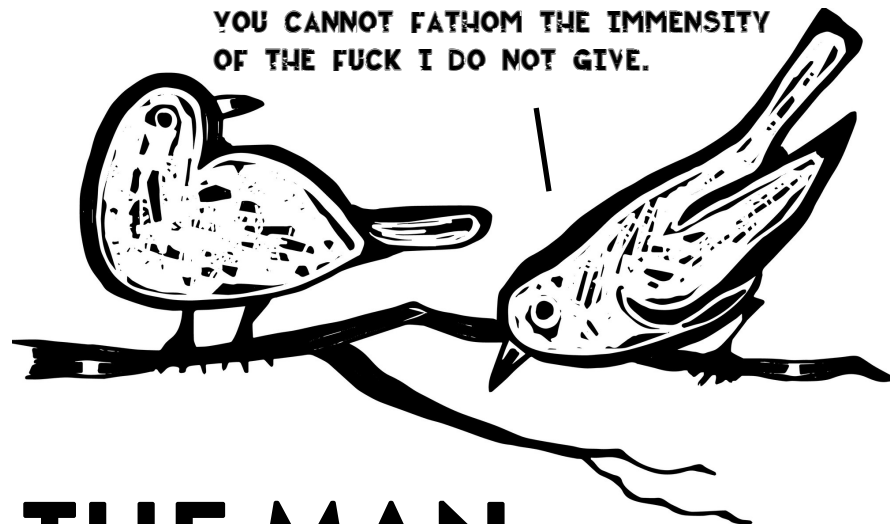
I was wrestling late one night with the typical early-adulthood crisis of "what would have happened if I had made a different choice regarding a particular boy?" and decided that the best way to definitively resolve the question was to explore the theoretical quantum multiverse for a version of me that had made the other choice.

Without significant pomp or circumstance, I mentally requested the thought-form of The Doctor to show up, and to my surprise I got a response almost immediately. I guess not a lot of folks are summoning fictional aliens just yet. Knowing that he has the (sometimes limited) ability to travel across the multiverse, I requested that he look around for me for a bit to see if there were any where I had made the other choice, and if so what the outcome had been. I don't even remember promising him a reward or making an initial offering of any kind.

He left, off to deal with the task, and I slept soundly, knowing that I would have an answer in due time.



YOU CANNOT FATHOM THE IMMENSITY
OF THE FUCK I DO NOT GIVE.



THE MAN

- Jason Quabache

That's one of the big things you notice when you get older. The Establishment looks just like you. The Man is a middle-aged fat man that looks vaguely like one of your uncles. Right now, the man has long hair. (Specifically, that weird look where he's bald on top with a long pony tail in the back.) In twenty years, The Man will have tattoos all up and down His arms. That's the strangest thing to learn: The Man is just a man. The world isn't ruled by a powerful cabal of Illuminated Ones or alien Reptiloids. This planet is ruled by a bunch of dumb stinking apes.

And The Machine isn't even a machine. The Machine is us. We are the Machine. Every single one of us is a slightly off balanced cog in The Machine. There's no way to get out of it. Eventually we will all end up ground down by the normal wear and tear of everyday use. And the worst part is that there is no way to destroy the Machine. It will just replicate itself with even more broken-down people. There is no escape, make your time.




PEOPLE
LIKE US
DON'T NEED
ANYONE'S
PERMISSION

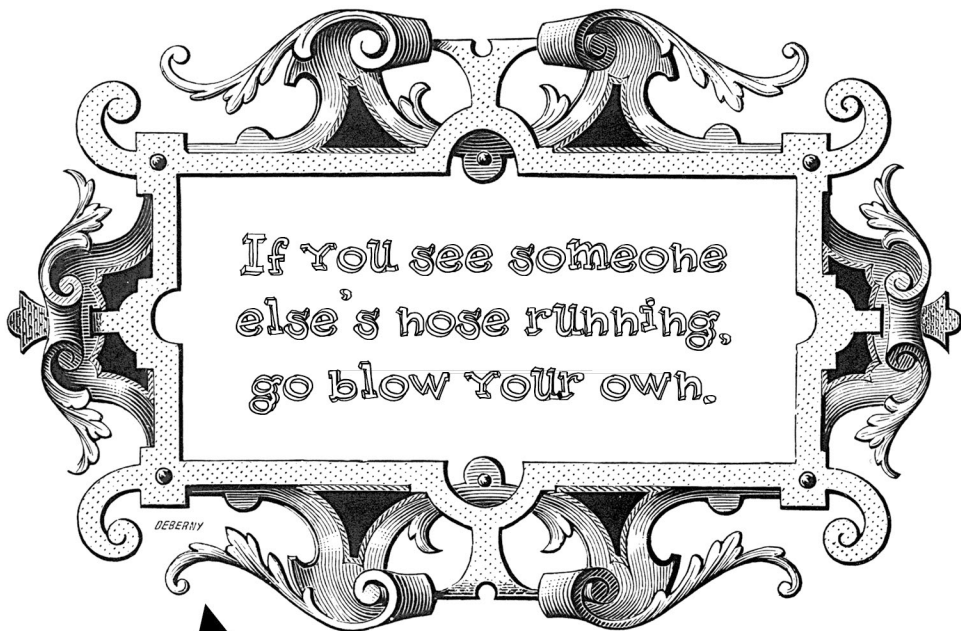
About two weeks later as I was getting to sleep, The Doctor returned. I didn't call him. He said (in that non-verbal, non-physical way that the moderately sane perceive their responses from the gods) that he was done with my request. That there was no universe wherein I had wound up with the other boy in question, with the exception of those places where we were both such different people that it didn't really count as "me" in the first place. That the current situation (with that person, at least) was completely inevitable based on experience and brain chemistry.

It wasn't necessarily the answer that I had been hoping for, but the closure helped me move on. So did I talk to a non-corporeal representation of a fictional character from a television show, or did I use that identity to trick myself into accepting the obvious truth I'd been avoiding?

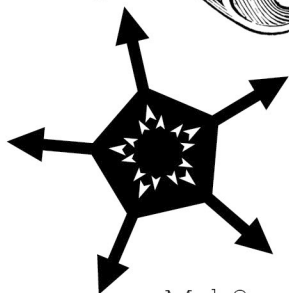
Or did I just make all this up for your amusement?



Not lesser than, fuck that!
When I meet God
I'm gonna kick his ass
And make my own Heaven.



If you see someone
else's nose running,
go blow your own.

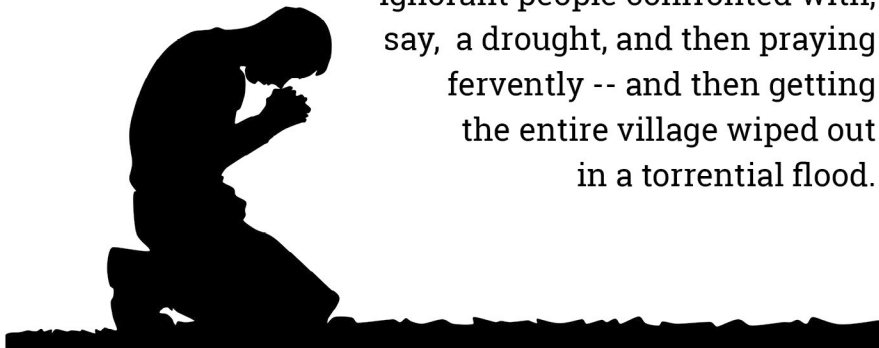


ON PRAYER

Mal-2 was once asked by one of his Disciples if he often prayed to Eris. He replied with these words:

No, we Erisians seldom pray, it is much too dangerous.

Charles Fort has listed many factual incidences of ignorant people confronted with, say, a drought, and then praying fervently -- and then getting the entire village wiped out in a torrential flood.



WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT ERIS

(NOT MUCH)

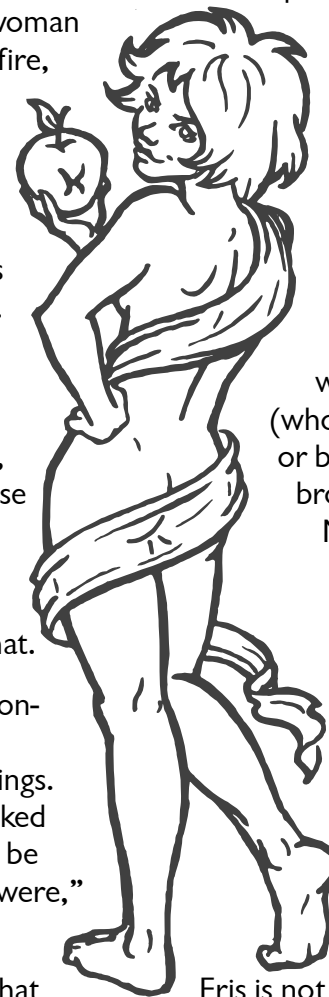


The Romans left a likeness of Her for posterity — She was shown as a grotesque woman with a pale and ghastly look, Her eyes afire, and torn, and as in Her Bosom. look pale and a chilly dagger

Her genealogy is utterly confused. of Ares and the Hera; or She goddess of night or wife of Chaos, Erebus, and whose Death, Doom, And that She Quarrels, Lies, goddesses like that.

One day Mal-2 con- and asked Eris if those terrible things. She had always liked that they cannot be matters. "They were," of indigestion,

Suffice it to say that She is not hateful or malicious. But She is mischievous, and does get a little bitchy at times.



with a pale and ghastly Her garment ripped concealing a dagger Actually, most women ghastly when concealing in their bosoms.

from the Greeks and is Either She was the twin daughter of Zeus and was the daughter of Nyx, (who was either the daughter or both), and Nyx's brother, brothers and sisters include Mockery, and Friendship. begat Forgetfulness, and a bunch of gods and

sulted his Pineal Gland She really created all of She told him that the Old Greeks, but trusted with historic She added, "victims you know."

