

MUTATED KLANTH

A
WPC
ZINE
BIG
BROTHER
RIP OFF
PRESENTATION



IF THIS IS
A HOT BATH
HOWCUM IT'S
GOT ALL THESE
VEGETABLES
IN IT!?

HALP!

CORFLU IN SEATTLE!!



CHAPTER FIFTEEN:

MUTATED
KLANTH

STARRING: Jim Anderson*H.Keating DuGarm*
Mike Kuypers*Tom Mitchell*Paula O'Keefe*

Steppin' In A
Slide Zone

There was an ominous thump in the dark. Jim Anderson shot up, awake immediately, and blurted an obscenity. "What was that?", asked a groggy voice from the floor.

Anderson rose from his bed. "I don't know." He switched on the light. The room looked okay, albeit a little crowded. His roommate Ken wasn't back yet - he swore half-heartedly under his breath, because his guest was therefore sleeping on the floor. Possessions were strewn about haphazardly. Had he ever been to one, Jim Anderson would have compared it to a room at a convention.

His guest sat up, rubbing his eyes. "Jim, look!", he exclaimed, pointing to the door to the room.

"What is it?", Jim asked.

"It looks like Slime with Eyes," his guest laughed. "Or - you ever see The Exorcist?" Jim blanched in reminiscence. "That's gross, Mitchell. I'd just about forgotten that -- well, hello there!"

Anderson had opened the door to examine the green substance that had been seeping through when he'd been startled to see it coalesce into a statuette. "Corflu?", he asked.

"Gotta be," asserted Tom.

"Hi guys," Corflu squeaked. "Silly place for a telephone -- in the hall and all. Why not get one in your room - Jim, you're the blond kid, right? I can get a good rate."

The animated statue sauntered into the room and found a warm, comfortable seat on top of Anderson's yogurt maker. Anderson turned to his guest, perplexity written all over his face. "Tom, you're more involved with this than I am. What is this creature doing on my yogurt maker?"

Tom sat up, clutching his knees. "Hopefully," he laughed in response, "not number two."

Anderson glared.

"Maybe I can explain," offered Corflu.

"I hope so."

"You see, I was in Boston in February..."

"...It's March now," interrupted Jim. He and Tom exchanged glances. Mitchell could see that Jim was not very happy about the bird's appearance.

"I know that, Jimmy," continued Corflu. "Anyway, I had organized Clint Thomas, Rich Morrissey, and George Guay into a group to generate fannish energy..."

"I remember that," Tom recalled.

"Bonus points for you," Corflu said. "Anyway, I had to make a

swift escape. I got back to George's a couple of minutes later, and everyone had disappeared.

"Now I'm confused."

Anderson lit a cigarette. "What would you like us to do?"

Corflu shifted his weight. "Well, just a few questions. Have you been in touch with anyone in recent days about Ken?" Jim and Tom both shook their heads.

"Good," Corflu sneered.

Tom and Jim disappeared.

* * * * *

"Hello? Hello?"

Mike Kuypers was completely confused. Only a few moments earlier, he'd been sharing dinner with his parents and sister, and now he was floating in a purplish-grey expanse of nothing. It was almost like Paul Decker had described No-Time, except it wasn't...and if Duo Damsel was around the corner, he'd thank his lucky stars.

Not that there were corners, mind you. At least, there didn't seem to be. It just seemed like a lot of nothing.

He tried to swim, as best he could, considering the circumstances. It wasn't too difficult, although he tired easily.

Kuypers thought he saw something ahead of him, and so he called ahead again.

"Hello? Oh, hello!" He squinted, trying to make out the nature of what he'd seen; it appeared humanoid. Say, but wasn't this exciting! He'd have to take notes...somehow, there wasn't scratch paper nearby...he thought he heard something. "Hello?", he shouted.

This time he definitely heard something. It sounded a little like vanilla cream, which didn't make sense. He kept swimming.

* * * * *

"Geh ro yeem," Paula shouted exultantly. "Hey there, droog!" She thought she saw a figure up ahead. It was probably an Interlacker, considering why she thought she was here. Here. Where? Hm. The Phantom Zone, perhaps? She stopped, although inertia carried her along, and examined her hands. There was something funny about them. Maybe should start using Dove For Dishes...

Paula giggled at the thought and called out again. "C'mon guys! What's the story?"

But there was no reply, and she kept swimming.

* * * * *

Well, it was warmer than North Dakota, Keating DuGarm thought as he floated along. There didn't seem to be any real current...or gravity. This must be what space was like.

But he was breathing; obviously there was an atmosphere of some sort -- or at least oxygen. Pressurized, too, or else he'd have exploded all over. Things looked real funny, too.

He saw someone ahead of him, floating towards him.

"Hey!", he shouted.

* * * * *

Kuypers heard another voice, but kept swimming towards the figure he'd seen. It was a male, but that was all he could guess at this distance.

"C'mon guys! What's the story?" This was the first voice, coming from behind him this time. He turned, and saw a second figure. This one looked female.

And then he bumped into something and blacked out.

* * * * *

Mike awoke a few minutes later, although he had no way of knowing how long he'd been out.

The figures were much closer now, the boy about ten feet away and the girl about twenty.

"Paula," shouted the male, "he's awake."

"Good," she yelled back. "Hi! I'm Paula O'Keefe. Who are you?"

Kuypers shook off some of the shock as best he could. "I'm Mike Kuypers. What's happening?"

"Hi, Mike," said the boy in a deep voice. "I'm Keating DuGarm. And we don't know what's happening. Corflu showed up..."

"Ohh..." groaned Kuypers in realization. "Same thing?", asked DuGarm, and Mike nodded.

"Ran into the wall, didn't you?", shouted Paula. Mike rubbed the sore spot in response. "Me 'n the boys, too, only not so hard, I guess. You proved to be kind of an example. Learnin' yer lessons 'n' all that."

Mike nodded ruefully.

"Barriers couldn't have been up long, though," she continued. "We were much further apart before."

"Someone knows where we are."

"What? I can't hear you," said Paula. "You've got to shout."

"I said," Mike shouted, "that someone knows where we are."

"Corflu," said DuGarm.

"Did he say something?", asked Paula.

"He said, 'Corflu'"

"Of course."

* * * * *

Anderson was conscious only of grey-purple-weightlessness. That and the fact that three people seemed to be directly below him. What if he had to urinate? James, you pragmatist, you, he chided himself, and then tried to figure out how to approach the others. Only one easy way he could think of...

"Uff da!", he shouted.

"Hey Jim!" Anderson whirled in slo-mo and saw Tom Mitchell about twenty feet away from him on the right.

"... Jim, Jim, I don't think we're in Minnesota anymore. It's... it's purple!"

"No shit, Janet!"

"Do you think this is what Corflu was talking about?"

"What?"

"Remember back in New York last June? When Corflu told us about a threat to fandom? Well, maybe everyone in Interlac is now a target. Fannish by association."

Jim thought about it.

"That's dumb, Tom."

"You got better?"

"No. Well, maybe. Your hand look funny?" Jim and Tom were silent for a moment, until Anderson remembered that there were people below. "Tom? Did you see them?", he pointed. Tom shook his head without looking down.

"Hello down there," Jim shouted.

Tom closed his eyes. "I don't like this place," he said.

* * * * *

Paula looked up. "Hey, we got company!" She swam up carefully, getting about six feet before her hand bounced off another barrier. "Hey droogs! Are you Interlackers?"

"Sure are," responded Tom. "Are you?"

"Paula O'Keefe at yer service," she bowed snappily.

"I'm Jim Anderson," Jim said, "famed minacker, and the tall smiling fellow is Tom Mitchell."

"Uh...hi," Tom said.

"Hi. I suppose Corflu sent you guys here too."

"Corflu? I thought he was on our side," said Tom. "Isn't he on our side?"

"That's what we thought, too," shouted Keating as he and Mike drew to within twenty feet of the others. "But he's responsible for dropping us here."

"Couldn't it be for our own protection?", Kuypers asked.

"Isolating some of the greatest fen in the world? I don't think so," said Keating.

"Besides," Paula interjected, "Corflu didn't know that Nancy and I have been in touch with Jay and Brenda. Ken was missing from his apartment."

Then they heard another voice from below, very distant.

"This is getting ridiculous," said Paula. "The question is, if we're here, how many Interlackers are left in the real world?"

CHAPTER SIXTEEN: "How Many Coloradoans Does It Take To Screw In A Light Bulb?"

Starring: Ray Barber * Jack Copley * Rick Foster * Jon Liggett * Jeff Slaten * Roger Winston * ~~David Glenn~~ * ~~Patricia Kaye Lane~~

Six.

"Has he..."

"...Answered the phone yet?"

"That's seven...eight rings..."

"Nine..."

Jon Liggett hung up at the tenth ring. "Let's see...that's David Kaufmann, no answer. Got that, Rog?"

"Yeah. That's twenty-five out of fifty." Roger scribbled a NO ANS next to Kaufmann's name on his list. He used Liggett's back as a hard surface to write on, which didn't seem to bother him. "Kuypers is next."

Liggett fumbled for his dime in the change return and put it back into the slot.

Hummmm...klik! klik! "Operator."

"Yes, operator, I'd like to make a collect call to Utica, Michigan. The name is Mike Kuypers, address 54338 Chateau Pointe. My name is Jon Liggett..."

--klik....zzzz-klik! klik! p a u s e . . . klik!
klik! zzzzzzzzzzz

"Hello, operator? Operator, we seem to have been cut off..."

"Damn!!" Winston crumpled up the list and threw it on the floor. "That's 26-zero, their favor!" He cursed more vigorously under his breath, echoed by similar curses muttered almost in unison by Jack Copley and Rick Foster.

"I don't believe it!" Ray Barber slammed his fist against the glass pane of the old-fashioned Clark Kent-style phone booth. "Every single one!"

"Maybe we should try -- " began Foster...

" -- a different phone," Jeff Slaten suggested helpfully.

Liggett hung up and waited for his dime to come back. "It's not the phone," he tried to convince himself, "it's not the...where's my dime, for guru's sake! It's got my dime again!!" Five hands simultaneously reached into their pockets and offered him an assortment of change.

"Levitz is next. Should we call him at home or..."

"...at DC. But I don't think he'll accept a collect call at the office." The handfuls of change came out again, and Liggett selected an assortment of quarters and dimes. 212-484-8000...he dialed nervously.

"Yes, may I speak to Paul Levitz at DC Comics?"

"Hello, Paul Levitz...? He isn't...do you expect him back today..."

"TWO WEEKS?" Liggett's hand pounded the phone uncontrollably. "Look, can you give me a number where he can be reached? This is an emergency...my name is Jon Liggett, he knows me...sort of...ummmmm..."

Rick Foster excitedly interrupted, "Who are you talking to?"

The realization that he was talking to a real live comic book pro suddenly began to set in. Liggett stammered, "Who am I talking to?"

The group gathered closer to the phone in a chorus of who-is-its until Liggett hushed them. "It's just Mike Barr," he whispered with his hand covering the mouthpiece. "Nobody important."

"Look, this is important. Could you leave a message...? Yeah, thanks. This is Jon Liggett...L-I-G-G-E-T-T...I'm a member of INTERLAC and, well, it's kind of hard to explain. It's like, every other member seems to have disappeared off the face of the earth. I've been trying to call them all, and there's either no answer or the call won't go through...or we get cut off in the middle of...hello? Mr. Barr? Hello?"

Barber slapped his forehead. "Not again! I swear, the phone company hates us!"

Foster shoved his right fist into his cupped left hand. "Nuts."

Slaten rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "This is scary, you know. I mean, what if..."

Winston scratched the part of his hair. "What if...what?"

Copley stifled a gasp from his wide-open mouth. "What if we're next?"

Liggett shook his head. "Don't be silly. What kind of a hair-brained conspiracy scheme could --" he stopped in mid-sentence as Rick Foster shhhh-ed him. Wordlessly, Foster motioned the whole group to follow; they tumbled out of the crowded phone booth in a disorganized heap. Amidst the hustle of mid-town Denver they were comparatively inconspicuous anyway, but Foster kept his finger to his tightly clamped lips and led the group into a cross street, down a little-used access road and into a filthy dead-end back alley. When a sufficient length of time had passed, he brought the Colorado Corps into a close huddle.

"There's no use kidding ourselves," he whispered. "Ken Gale must have been only the first to go. Corflu is out to destroy INTERLAC, and it's just possible that he's about to succeed. I mean, figure it -- whether or not the other members are even still alive is irrelevant. If he's destroyed our communications links, then there's nothing left to hold fandom together. You see what I'm getting at?"

"Yeah, I...I guess so. What do we do now?" Slaten trembled a little.

Copley blurted out, "What happened to all that stuff about Corflu organizing members to generate fannish energy to save Ken? Wasn't that the -- "

" -- Stuff it, Jack!" Barber shoved him in the ribs. This wasn't the time for subtlety.

Foster looked more solemn than his friends thought his face had the capacity for. "We're gonna have to split up...lay low. Don't communicate except by mail. No phone calls." Copley cracked a smile, but lost it quickly when he met Foster's glare. "I'm dead serious. If someone or something -- whether Corflu or somebody working through him -- is out to destroy fandom, it's pretty obvious that they have some way of stopping our phone calls. And they've probably got a tap on all our home phones.

"Now look -- all of you -- keep a low profile. I'll contact you by mail and maybe we can organize some sort of resistance. But until then, we go solo. Understand?"

Six heads nodded as one. And silently, the Corps walked out of the alley and went their separate ways. Had any of them passed the phone booth on the way home, they might have seen a short, stalkerly green figure materialize out of the phone receiver. Unfortunately, none of them did. A grey-haired fat lady with make-up two inches thick, however, happened to be out walking her German Shepherd at the right time and the right place, and the dog took particular interest in the bird-shaped figure. Said pooch dragged his helpless mistress down the block and into the phone booth, where the startled Corflu popped back into the phone just in time to escape its 8-inch jaws.

* * * * *

Six hours later, Rick Foster began to type a letter that would eventually be xeroxed (on blue paper for disguise) and mailed to every member and waitlister of INTERLAC he could find...

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN "The Best Little Hotpot in Seattle"

STARRING: * Gary Brown * Liz Smith *

The doorbell rang. Emma Smith wiped her hands dry of dishwater, and then walked to the front door of her apartment. Looking through the peephole, she saw a tall, suntanned, mustachioed gentleman with a painfully nervous expression on his face.

"Who's there?" she asked.

"Gary Brown."

"Who?" Emma knew many of her sister Lizzie's crazy friends, but this one was new.

"I'm in...um, I'm in Interlac." It was strange to admit.

Emma hesitated for a moment, and then opened the door, hoping she wouldn't regret it. Brown stood outside, lost and a little chilly. "Come in, I'm Lizzie's sister Emma," she said. "Would you like a Coke? A cup of tea?"

Exhausted Gary managed only a 'yes', and collapsed on the love seat in the living room. Emma, taking note of Gary's condition, went back out to the kitchen, poured a cup of coffee, and returned to find him asleep. She smiled, then finished the dishes. Looking at her watch, she noticed it was time to have lunch with her friend Eli. Gary was still asleep, and Liz would be back soon.

"Lizzie can take a surprise," Emma thought to herself. She donned her coat and left.

* * * * *

The telephone rang. Brown groggily got up and stumbled across the room. Silly yellow trimline "hello".

"Is Liz there?"

"Liz?"

"Is...Brown, is that you?"

"Harry?"

"Yeah. Gary, what are you doing at Liz's? You have to be back at work at 7 a.m. tomorrow...jeez, just because you're leaving next week..."

"Right, Liz's..."

"Brown, what are you doing there?"

"Um...I don't really know. I just kinda showed up at the Space Needle. I knew that meant I was in Seattle, and so I hitched up to here, and...and I'm just sitting her. Liz's sister let me in, but..."

"Listen, there isn't much time," Harry interrupted. "At least you haven't been lost yet. Interlactities are vanishing left and right. I can't find Denys Howard or Tom Mitchell, and as best I can follow his tracks, Corflu's heading west. If this keeps up, I won't need your help collating the mailing anymore, you know!"

"I know, I know," said Gary. "That Corflu...whatever it is, statue, bird, Mr. Bill imitator...he's why I'm here, I think. My poor car - first my apartment gets ripped off, and now my poor car is probably being broken into as I'm talking to you."

"Look, Gary, I can understand that. You just make sure Liz is okay; I'm gonna keep trying to call everyone in Interlac to make sure they --

Harry stopped short.

"Hello...Harry...you there?" Nothing but static. Brown cursed his increasingly usual bad luck and started to hang up, when the static miraculously cleared. "Harry! What happened? I thought we'd lost you! What's --"

"Gary, I gotta hang up. This is no joke. Get in touch with Flynn right away, but don't use Liz's phone, and don't call him at Key Hall. Try the radio station, WRGW. Or better yet, write him a letter -- special delivery -- but let him know where you and Liz are. Just don't use the phone, Gary! Don't use the....." his voice trailed off. Dial Tone.

"Hello? Broertjes? Hello?" But Harry was gone. Strange apa. They certainly played fun games in Interlac. But the way Harry disappeared sounded - ominous. As if there really was something sinister in the air.

That was another question: why was he so tired? Granted, being zapped across the North American continent wasn't exactly an easy thing in itself, but...

He heard keys in the door. He tensed for a minute, because he didn't know how Liz would react... "Hello?", he asked. "Liz?"

She regarded the stranger stoically, her face not betraying any surprise, shock, or fear. She shifted the bag of groceries she was carrying. "Friend of Emma's?", she inquired.

"Nope. Yours. I'm Gary Brown."

"You kissed Polly Levitz? I thought he had better taste than that."

"Cute."

"You want a Coke? Maybe some tea?"

"No thanks. Um...Harry just called, and..."

"Hubbypoo? What'd hubbypoo say? Give me every word in detail."

"Um...well, he said Interlackers were disappearing right and left."

"Disappearing? Who?"

"He mentioned Denys Howard and Tom Mitchell. I don't know who else."

"Trout? He was out in Minnesota with Jimbo. If dearest Jimbo's missing..."

"Wait, I haven't finished yet. Harry himself disappeared while I was talking to him. I'm beginning to think that something is really happening here."

"Oh yes. Believe it all, if Harry says it."

"Well, he yelled that you should write Mike Flynn before he... went away."

"Migglypoosie?"

"Whoever."

A high squeaky voice came from the dining room. Brown stiffened but Liz peeked inside, and sure enough, found Corflu.

"Corflu!", she squeaked, running towards him. "Hello, Flupoo."

"Flupoo?", squawked the bird. "Say that again and I'll drop a sixteen ton weight on you."

"That's silly," Liz snickered. "Are you ticklish?"

"'Course not. I'm a...er,statue. We're not ticklish."

"Oh, let me try." Liz advanced upon Corflu with Intent to Tickle in her eyes. The creature backed away slowly, enough so that Liz could grab him by the torso. He was cold to her touch, and hard, like steel. Not at all like clay.

She shrieked.

Gary went into the dining room to see Liz struggling to keep Corflu in her grasp. "What's the problem?", he asked.

"He feels funny."

"He? Is this...Corflu?"

"This is Corflu. Here, you hold him. I need someplace to put him." Gary held the mascot in his hands as tightly as possible, following Liz's order in his confusion. Liz had gone around to the kitchen, frantically searching the cabinets for something suitable for a Corflu prison.

Her hotpot.

She put it on the counter. "Quick," she said, "put him in here."

In the third attempt to transfer him, however, Corflu jumped free. Liz rushed after him as Gary watched perplexed. "Come here, Flusy-poosy," she coaxed. But Corflu would have none of that, and he ran for the front door. However, being only a foot tall, he couldn't quite reach the doorknob.

"I've trapped you now," Liz began.

"Oh no you haven't," said Corflu. He waved his arm and then Liz disappeared.

Gary didn't know quite how to react. He quickly grabbed a piece of paper and wrote

IMPORTANT!
WRITE TO FLYNN!

Liz's sister would see it. Then he stood motionless in the Smith living room, until Corflu once more waved his arm, and Brown, too, disappeared.

"Stupid humans," Corflu muttered to himself. He hopped over to the bookshelf where the telephone was, and as quickly as possible dialed a number.

"Hello," he said into the speaker. "I'm going to try Denver again, then I've got a few more to mop up out east. But we're almost done."

And then Corflu jumped into the telephone just as Emma's key turned in the front door.

* * * * *

Now, the trick was to get out alive. Ken Gale eyed the length of the corridor...waited...and listened. Nothing. He pulled on his jacket and casually walked down the hallway as though he had every right to be there.

Half-way down, a side door opened a few feet behind him, and a smartly-dressed woman walked down the hall in the opposite direction. Play it cool, Gale, he thought, and continued on without revealing the slightest hint of nervousness. In his slightly-tattered New York Bell jacket, even Ken Gale could look inconspicuous in the vast complex of offices of New York Bell.

For the first time in his life, he was thankful for having been a phone company employee for four otherwise-wasted years of his life. His key-card had gained him admittance to the security doors that nobody else could have penetrated, and it was a simple trick to tap into the lines and make all the free calls he needed. But it had to be done quickly and unobtrusively. The phone company was a corporate idiot savante -- despite its bureaucratic stupidity, somebody could easily catch him by accident.

So he had called Harry -- in fact, interrupted his call to Liz Smith by sheer coincidence, though he'd had to keep it a one-way call to Harry only, in order to defeat any possible tap of Liz's phone -- and the word was spreading. Harry would tell everyone, no sweat.

And Miggle was driving into town right after finals. Pray to goddess that wouldn't be too late. The INTERLAC Espionage Squad. Their last chance. Foster's letter clinched that.

His mental telepathic link with the real Corflu had explained everything, filled him in on the events of the past many months. And Ken Gale alone had the full picture. Now Harry and Mike knew. Mike Valerio was on his way with Scott Sherman, and Foster's mail campaign would surely round up a few more...

"Hold it, you! What are you doing here?" An armed security guard aimed a laser pistol directly at Ken's head.

Ken whirled around and pulled his expired ID card from his pocket. Don't look at the date...

"Hm...hm...hm..." the guard examined it closely. "Okay, you're clear. I just didn't recognize you. New on this shift?"

"Yeah. First day," Ken lied.

"S'funny...did you have a brother who used to work here or something. You look an awful lot like --"

Sirens, Bells, Flashing Lights. As though out of a bad movie, the general alarm chose that moment to go off. Ken grabbed his opportunity. "Holy crow, that woman I saw down the hall must have broken in. Here's your chance to earn a promotion!"

The guard's eyes widened. "Thanks, buddy -- I won't forget you for this!" He darted down the hall in the direction Ken pointed, pistol in hand, ready to make the biggest mistake of his life.

Ken whistled innocently. Whatta maroon... He reached the end of the corridor, turned into a stairwell, down a couple flights, into a storage area, a few more passageways...and finally he emerged out behind the receptionist at the personnel office. The sound of the alarm was very distant and muffled now. Home free...

The receptionist pulled out a stun-gun and pulled the trigger. Ken Gale slumped over, unconscious...

NEXT: WE FINALLY WRAP THIS WHOLE THING UP, BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

p l u s

THE MAKING OF MUTATED KLANTH...MISS IT NOT!!!!

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