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Eastern European Cartoons

Quantum Crush

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This is one of those short stories with long history based on the wondrous life of himself. It did really happen to him once (or twice now). Please enjoy.

As a young man, Felix Futzbucker dreamed of being entangled to a woman, quantumly. Felix didn't believe in "destiny" or "fate" or "soulmates" or some other concepts that had no proper scientific disposition to them, theoretical at least, but he did believe in linked particles, linked and inseparable, such as when one particle is measured, the other particle's properties will be instantly affected, even if the distance between them is the universe, and he knew that everyone, including him, of course, and his potential inamorata, all were made of particles, hence, with some chance, two people could be entangled and their lives would be forever intertwined, each person's actions and emotions affecting the other on a profound level. Both scientific and metaphorical implications of the described phenomena made Felix's brain convolutions dance and produced an unbeknownst and unbeatable pick-up line, but women he attempted to impress with it did not show appreciation towards his ingenuity, and "Do you know what

Quantum Entanglement is?" was always met by "What?" of the multiverse of intonations and meanings and a face, sometimes neutral, sometimes confused, nay a little bit scared, or suppressing a spasmodic chuckle, especially from ladies familiar with different types of entanglement, who interpreted Felix's innocent ice-breaker question as an invitation to a specific event involving bondage, discipline, dominance, and submission, which, when Felix, quite a stereotypically nerdy-looking gentleman, said to them, sounded either as a good joke or a good chance of being knighted to the honourable ranks of wankers. Changing the line wasn't an option, for it represented a test, a simple one-question test aimed to filter out unfit candidates and immediately spotlight the fit ones, moreover, the negative outcomes never upset Felix — he knew that the incurable beauty of his personal cosmos would eventually, with a non-zero chance, attract another human being and, in the infinitely long run, at least in one of the infinite parallel universes, as a response to his inquiry for the presence of knowledge about quantum entanglement in a romantic interest, he would hear, 'I actually do.'

Thus, on one illustrative occasion of Felix's social skills, he was engaged in his daily two-hour commute home from the university campus and sat in a car of a long train, the route of which meandered through a dozen tiny unpeopled towns, villages, hamlets, among hills and green fields dotted with cattle of various species, including cows and sheep, and some horses, a deciduous forest, dense like a wall, thirty minutes of a coastline with quite a mesmerizing view — all that under the blue canopy interspersed with thin, barely visible, white wisps of evaporated

water now gathering only a few hundred miles upwards with no hint of the rain. The length of the commute forced, nay generously allowed, Felix to lose himself in a book, this time 'The Dance of Particles', which he preferred over the scenery, however Shinkai-esque it was, for he and his brain both needed something to process continuously; otherwise, due to Felix's concerns over genetics, the senile decay would creep up on him earlier, and by the age of fifty, he would descend down to dormant dementia, which was his second biggest fear of all multitude of others. "The second" because a second ago his first biggest fear dislodged its contenders once suddenly appeared sitting in front of him. That was, well, a woman, a woman of approximately Felix's age, whose visage, made beautifully harmonious by her sun-kissed olive skin contrasted against hardly tamable cascades of dark tresses, some falling from a mop on top of her head, conjured an otherworldly beauty; whose lips, curved in a careless smile, imbued a layer of romantic whimsy and irreverent wickedness beneath the sharp, sculpted features; and whose expressive eyes, framed by arching brows, dancing between mirth and melancholy, despite appearing somewhat blank, looked, no — "stared", or, well, "drilled" Felix. To Felix, she was the epitome of his dream girl, a live embodiment of his waifu, almost fictional, so he would've never thought he could meet someone like her in real life, but there she was, no cap — the embers of her eyes pierced his chest and beams of her vision went inside him, straight into his heart, and immediately altered amplitude, frequency, and phase shift of Felix's heartbeat's sinusoidal wave, and made Felix's skin vibrate and pupils dilate. He noticed them looking into each other's eyes and immediately averted his gaze, glancing

to and fro: at the other passengers sitting there, reading books, newspapers, listening to whatever was in their headphones, chatting, laughing, sleeping; in the window, at sheep meadowing there, and ships standing still far out in the bay; then focused on the blurry trees, felt dizzy, and buried himself back into the book. Even looking down, Felix felt, no, he knew that the strangerette kept her eyes on his face, which made him both uncomfortable and excited, perhaps too excited, for finally (finally!) someone seemed to be expressing interest in his persona, and not just someone, but her, HER, HER! H. E. R. It's not possible, he thought, he must have fallen asleep on the train after a long day and now his brain is messing with him, and to test that hypothesis, while turning pages with his left hand, he pinched his right hand. No, high likelihood of being awake. Then what if, he thought, she's the one? The entanglement line was ready, but he couldn't bring it up straight away, for he thought there should be some bureaucratic exchange of names and opinions on the weather first, which was too splendidly summery to say anything novel and intriguing of, and it would be a complete cringe to drop the entanglement line on a strangerette on a train ahead of any ado, moreover such a goddess of a strangerette, who, he was afraid, would laugh him off and make him embarrassed or stand up and find another place to sit away from the weirdo or slap him on the cheek and call the train police to have him thrown off the train at the next station and left all by himself in an unknown place without a map or any chance to find a way home until he would get lost and die in misery surrounded by silent lambs; or at best she would just ignore him. Neither of the aforementioned he wanted as a reaction back from a

woman like her, for his dream girl was supposed to answer that question according to the script he thoroughly thought through. He looked up at her again and saw the corners of her lips striving to become a smile. He blushed and returned to the book. What if they truly are entangled? What if he spoils everything and they would never meet again in this universe where he was a captive? This was the only chance he had and he had no desire to screw it, so, giving himself some time to gather thoughts and strategise, he decided not to open that box, not yet. What if he initiated that bureaucratic exchange, introduced himself and asked her name, she answered, saying something like "Nina" — she looked like Nina to him for some reason — and smiled? What to do next? He could ask her where she was from, perhaps how was her day, what she did for a living, what she liked: hobbies, interests, films, music, and other quotidian things. Even if he started with a friendly smile and a casual, silly, meaningless question, would that still be impressive enough and portray him as an interesting person and reveal his personal cosmos in the best way possible? But, worst of all, what if that casual, silly, meaningless opener would evoke a positive response? What would happen next? Felix wanted to believe he'd be able to steer the conversation in the right direction, trying to pique the curiosity of his passion in his passions, which were, for a matter of fact, immense, including all his knowledge of the universe and reality, and even if she didn't know anything about those topics, he thought he would be able to educate her or at least amuse with high-level principles and facts. Yes, that, he concluded, was enough. After all, even if their particles are entangled, there's no guarantee they like the same things, and that was

totally fine: they would laugh together and regale each other with silly anecdotes of themselves for probably at most half an hour (albeit he lost touch with the fabric of time) until arriving at their stations, then hastily scribble their phone numbers — Felix would've allowed her to write her number inside his book, which on normal occasion would consider blasphemous, and then he would've kept that book for life, perhaps framed it as the first artefact of their loving, trusting and amicable relationship, or even torn out a page from the book with his number written for her, in case she didn't have paper to write it down — and promise to keep in touch and afterward he would call her and invite on a date, they would meet once, twice, thrice and so on to infinity and beyond it. On one of those meetings, perhaps after visiting a museum or just a film screening, they would go to a bar, have a couple of drinks (not at all Felix's specialisation, but for her he was ready to become specialised in anything), stroll hand in hand along the bay, listen to the sea and seagulls and see how a star would fall, at the end of the walk, for the first time, kiss. Then their relationship and amount of love would escalate in geometric progression over the years, self-multiplying and producing new entities, such as kids. That would require, in turn, a bigger accommodation for all three or four of them together, and they would be able to afford it, at least with a mortgage, after Felix would've become a renowned professor and she would've also become renowned someone — he, of course, would love to see her as a professor as well, but later in that branch of thought, he concluded that he would've been happy for her whoever she would've become — and live there happily till death does them p—

But trains have a tendency to stop, including those carrying people or those carrying thoughts, and sometimes they happen to stop at the same time, abruptly, squeaking rails, forgetting or failing to announce what the station is, which was exactly what happened with Felix, when that murmurous monologue in the depth of his brain voided. The doors opened and passengers started leaving the train.

—Excuse me,—the strangerette said, looking through him. Felix flinched and fell silent, and she continued,—Do you know what the station is?

Slowly, Felix raised his eyes at the display with a running line of letters hanging from the ceiling right next to him, then looked back at her and an artel of goosebumps marched all over his skin, from the nape down the backbone. He didn't notice it before, but now he saw a long white cane standing next to the stangerette.

—Sorry, are you here?—she asked.

—Yes-yes, it's...—he looked at the display again and read it.—It's This-and-that.

—Thank you,—she said and nodded.—They don't seem to announce stations today. Very annoying.

—Yes, ugh, oh, wait...—Felix said and checked the station name outside, on the clock, and another sudden realisation hit him.—Shit, oh sorry... I missed mine,—he said with a stammer and added,—Thanks.

He stood up, slung his backpack over his shoulder, tucked the book under his armpit, and headed out of the car, passed the girl, who still looked at where he sat, reached for the button to open doors but hesitated, looked at the girl again, stepped back, gulped, and called her:

—Excuse me...

Offering her ear to better hear, she slightly turned her head Felixwards.

He cleared his throat, his thoughts, and, gathering all his confidence inside his clenched fists, as if casting a spell that he studied for years, asked:

—By any chance, do you know what Quantum Entanglement is?

She turned her head more, looking where he stood, and, with a pinch of surprise in her voice, replied:

—I actually do.

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