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Lyrical I

The Unremitting Monedey

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Dear wanderer,

Today, in this pivotal moment in our daily lives, I'm sharing with you one of my favourite pieces written earlier. It hasn't lost relevance since its original publication and, I should hope, can brighten your Monday.

Beams of appreciation,

Vanya



Symposium by Akseli Gallen-Kallela

An alarm noise disrupts the dream. No, I'll carry on. A nightmare is a scream, it ends with the alarm, and yet again begins. Not like that, no. The morning lethargy's a state pristine, the lack of energy, thoughts

— What do you do for a living?

— Well... I sell gems.

— Are you a jeweller?

I don't know. Am I? Could've been a good euphemism.

— I don't know. No, I guess. I mean virtual gems. In games.

— So you make games, what a fun, huh?

— No, I don't make them. Other people do it.

— What do you do then?

— I... analyse and sell gems in those games. To u– to players.

— You sell virtual gems? To players?

— That's what I said.

— What kind of job is that?

— Officer, can I go, please? I have a connecting flight in half an hour.

The Monday morning's time for wishes. I wish I were back in bed. You can't though, who's gonna pay you for that? Researchers? I don't know. I wish researchers paid me for sleeping. Nonsense, wake up and go, go, go, commence the ride into the abyss where stress is bliss, where nine to five is not four fifty-one, unfortunately, sadly. I wish I could sell my dreams to someone who needs them. No one needs your dreams. There are people without dreams. Having no dreams is better than having your dreams. Go and work. On my way to the office, I wish I get run over by a car, a vehicle, a machine, or at least a coffeemachine.

— Imagine joe from the arse's end. Every day, his dear mommy gives him some money to buy food

A kid with a mummy of a deer sounds rather eerie, but anyways.

— but joe instead buys gems in our game. Imagine he burns all his pocket money to buy virtual gems, and you sell them to him. Would your conscience torture you?

Shan't my conscience ever bear it! How dare you offer me this? I'm high above it, the principles of mine I have, the pillar of an honest man. What you do here is nothing more than a crime against the human psyche, perhaps – against humanity as a whole! It's cruel, anti-moral. Don't call me back. Bye Bye! runs away from the room.

— Why would it torture me?

— Aren't you sorry for joe?

— I'm sorry his name has no capital letters.

Why would my conscience care about some random guy from the middle of nowhere and the inner life of his pocket? joe has a right to decide on how to dispose of his finances. After all, joe is a responsible adu... wait he's not, actually. He said joe's a kid. Okay. Whatever happens to him is his parent's fault, is it? is it? IS IT?! Financial literacy must be inculcated from an early age and the fact that joe's financial decisions are totally and undoubtedly his own is much more important than the outcome.

— Good.

Gems aren't cigarettes, after all. Right? Right?

— Gems aren't cigarettes, after all.

Right?!

— And not crystal meth, ha!

— Exactly.

— Okay, you're hired.

— Good.

Who are these people? Money, think about money, think money. Without these people, you can't make money. You make money together, you're a team. All I can think of is a galley. What? Row! Row, you bloody bastards. Grab the oars! Hold them tight! The storm is coming! Row! Perish those who stop rowing. Virtually all types of galleys had sails that could be used in favourable winds, but you see, the market is a bitch, a gladiator pit, a melee, but. When Monday is a payday, it turns into Moneday. The watercooler stories of past forgotten glories, of metrics and successes, of fired, hired, bored and tired. Myths. Fireplace talks. Shamans brewing Earl Grey. Teabag in, water in, steep, milk in, teabag out. Phew. For the galley, human effort was always the primary method of propulsion, that's why as a collective, we thrive. Corporate culture is the backbone of our success. We value. The primary method of propulsion of the tea experience is leaving a teabag in a cup whilst pouring in the milk. The teabag then can be used

as an adjuster to ensure the correct strength and colour of the tea is achieved. Few. It's not only a victory of a collective over an individual but a triumph of the infinite over the finite. One must imagine the galley rowers happy.

— Well, ninety-nine percent of them buy nothing but they still might watch ads, though.

— Do we sell ads too?

— Yes.

— How many ads do they watch?

— A lot.

— How much is "a lot"?

— A lot. Imagine that guy from A Clockwork Orange sitting with his eyes wide open, watching ads, flashing pictures of things he would be happy to buy.

— Happy, though?

— Happy.

Only two industries call their customers "users": drug dealers and software companies. One person– sorry, "user"– spent ten thousand dollars on virtual candy wrappers. He could've, you know, buy something useful. Like books. Or booze.

— We call them Whales?

— Where?

— Where?

— Why Wales?

— . . . Whales, large marine mammals.

— Oh, I see. Why, though?

— They spend a lot. Whales are big. I said that already.

— Makes sense.

It doesn't, actually. Ten thousand dollars. Shite. Was his person possessed by the devil or inflation? Whales wail in Wales. Why not elephants? They are big, too, and they wail, too. Don't get high on your own supply. La la-la la la-la. When is this day gonna

— Our mission is in making our users happy. We provide them with great entertainment. They provide us with great amounts of money. But don't think about money. The most important thing is to entertain them. Money comes naturally if you have a good product. Our game is a good product and you have to make sure it remains so.

They are just numbers. Numbers cannot be happy. But, admittedly, they are much happier with a factorial sign. Your data's lost among the petabytes of other numbers stored on hard drives of well-cooled data

centres. Numbers have no personalities. Wrong. What? Zero has a personality. And none? And none. It's distinctly distinct. One broke gambler is a tragedy, a million broke gamblers – statistic. The noise they are from where you are trying to derive a signal. Jerry. We call him "a night elf". Why? When others are asleep, he keeps working.

— Entertainment is one of the most indispensable aspects of modern human life and culture. Imagine how dull the world would've been if there was no good entertainment. Movies, music, games

Boo... ze?

— are keeping us sane in this wrecking world. Serving our users is our goal and purpose.

Shmurpose.

— If at least for a second joes can distract themselves from their miserable existence, if at least for a second joes can feel joy, our mission is accomplished.

Ulysses among lotophagi. A stranger among strangers. Selling isn't a goal per se. Gems are just a tool, a currency which can buy you happiness, a material from which happiness can be produced, forged, moulded.

— They buy it for a reason, you see? They choose life, choose a job, choose a career, choose a family, choose a fucking big television, choose washing machines, cars, iPhones, dental insurance, and then they

choose gems.

— There are no reasons for it.

— No reasons? Who needs reasons when you've got a new shiny gladiator outfit for your sassy girl warrior?

— But there's no girl warrior, she doesn't exist, we created her, Jerry did it, he's our fucking brilliant artist *Jerry salutes,* and now that joe wants to buy new pink armour knickers for her so other joes see her having those pink armour knickers and they want pink armour knickers for their girls warriors or girls mages or rogues or boys, doesn't matter, what matters is those pink armour knickers do not fucking exist.

— They are green actually, the knickers.

— Who cares?

— Why are you so mean? If a boy or a girl has a virtual avatar, either a boy or a girl or a fucking night elf, they can't just walk naked, right? They need knickers or something. That's what we do.

— We can take those knickers from them, tomorrow, today. We can delete them and those joes and joannas will forget about those knickers the next day. We can do whatever we want with them! We're the architects of that matrix! I can't believe the smartest people on Earth, those fine men and women, waste their fucking lives making fucking virtual knickers and selling them for virtual joes and joannas. We could've colonised Mars by now!

— It's not you who says that now but the eighth pint.

— Pints don't talk, people do. I do!

— The smartest people on Earth make other less smart people happier – what's wrong with that? We give them a chance to sit back, chill and enjoy their evening or a long commute to work.

— I don't care. It's a mental abuse, we're abusing them, gaslighting them into the virtual reality where pink armour knickers matter something.

— Jerry! Hey!

— Hey?

— What colour were the new fancy knickers you made yesterday?

— Emerald, they were emerald.

— See? I told you.

— It's worse than a casino or a slot machine! Those things are fair to you. Those things are pure math. Yes, everyone knows the casino always wins. You risk money, even being a reckless dork whose daughter wanted a teddy bear but you didn't buy it because you gambled to win something, maybe because of addiction, maybe to have fun, or for other reasons, maybe because you hate your daughter. But in our fucking pink– sorry, Jerry, *emerald*– knickers world everyone lives by our

made-up nonsensical rules, rules designed to get the money-milking machine rolling.

— Well. . . Then I guess, fuck you, the absurdity of being! Cheers!

— I can't take it anymore! Work has no life! Life has no worth! I'm going to finish it here! I want to drown in beer! Bartender, a whole barrel for me!

— Please, don't be late tomorrow, it's only Monday.

Read next part

Another Stitch On The Wall

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