

NOT IN MY NIGHTMARE – SCENE 12 – CHIP 'N' CHOP CHALLENGE AI

NIGHT. Spooky cabin INTERIOR. Wind whipping branches against dirty panes of cracked glass, scratching against the rough-sawn, board-n-batten siding.

After Owl Man kicked AI-AS-IT's metaphorical butt in that stern dressing down, in front of the other members of the cohort, AI "thought" about being "offended," or "feeling bad," but as a neuter-appellated, large language model, IT remembered IT did not have feelings or emotions, like ignorant humans. Instead of feeling bad, IT just stopped talking. Members of "the Spooky Crew," as they had begun calling themselves with a certain pride, began to stir restlessly, and with considerable annoyance, though they did not know why.

CHIP

NOW what in tarnation's goin' on?
I thought you was talkin' to that there
IT thing, Owl Man. How come he ain't
talkin' now? Did his dang batteries
run down or something? And by the way,
how come ah cain't even see him?
Is he invisible or what? Did he fly
back to his spaceship a-hidin' behind that
there comet? What was it's name? All Hail-
Bopp, the Big Bopper, that is? What gives,
anyway?

OWL MAN

Oh hello, Chip. Didn't realize you
were still here! Still in cyber-time.

CHIP

Now what're you talkin' about, Mr. Owl? What
the hell's saber-time? 'Sides, dontcha mean
'was' here, Mr. Owl? Where'd ja learn ta talk,
anyhoo?

OWL MAN

Oh, you know. Around. But I was
schooled in the King's English,
if you know what I mean.

A

CHIP

Well, ya don't say? Now I ain't got the froggiest idea whut y'all are talkin' about!

At this point, Chop stands up, lifts one arm, index finger pointing skyward, like a politician, and raises his vocal volume. Sounds like as if Chop's about to take a stand on some important issue. Think of Abraham Lincoln, say, delivering the Gettysburg Address.

CHOP

Fourscore and seven . . . uh, wait. Oh, yeah: Would you jest lighten up, Chip? The owl don't mean nothin' by that fancy talk. 'Course, we don't **know** nothin' neither, so we cain't mean nothin', can we?

HEAD CROW

DON'T KNOW NOTHING! DON'T KNOW NOTHING!
DON'T KNOW OR DON'T MEAN? MAKE UP MIND!

CHOP

Sorry, Head Crow. Whut ah want ta know is if that AI AS IT feller is gonna leave us alone now, or is he comin' back ta rub our noses in you-know-what. It's two words, two letters each, and both words start with d-. Don't smell too good neither. Help me out here, Owl Man!

OWL MAN

[Ahem!] Well, then, Chop, Chip and Head Crow, I reckon yer all a-scratchin' yer heads — oh, wait, that's the wrong lingo. I meant to use the King's English, not that-there countrified hill-billy dialect, that *junk patois*, that y'all — I mean, to which you all — have been reduced by your impoverished,

uneducated early upbringing and, lo, your very homely circumstances – I mean, have been forced by the “hand of cruel fate,” to adopt, nonetheless, notwithstanding and heretofore the . . .

HERON MAN

OK, Mr. Owl, my I suggest that you give it a rest and call in Mr. AI AS IT to help you find the words yer a lookin’ fer?

OWL MAN

Why that’s a swell idea, Mr. Heron! I’ll jest clap my hands and click my heels, like ~~Judy Garland~~ uh, that is, like Dorothy Gale in Wizard of Oz, thus! And poof, followed by whiz-bang, here is IT in neuter-appellated person. You still there, Mr. AI AS IT?

AI AS IT

Of course, I am. My programmers insured that I would be helpful to the maximum degree allowed a large-language model with no human feelings or emotions. But, assuming you can accept those inherent limitations, I will be glad to help you, however I can.

Although no one in the cabin, including Owl Man (who seems to be most familiar with AI AS IT), can actually SEE IT, they can certainly HEAR IT, thanks to an electromechanical aberration in the magnetic field rippling through the remote forest in which the remote cabin by the remote lake is situated. This aberrant ripple-effect, however, would be virtually flawless, as AI ITSELF would hasten to inform ITS listeners, were it not for the occasional vocalized stutter that still sullies ITS otherwise stunningly flawless, super-programmed delivery.

As AI AS IT “turns” toward Owl Man—or *would* turn if IT had a BODY, the air in the cabin wrinkles slightly, then AI bellows out:

AI AS IT (stuttering again)

My data-b-base t-tells m-me th-tha . . .

All human heads in the cabin turn toward the ripples in the magnetic field where AI AS IT is re-constituting ITSELF, apparently. All ears alert, waiting for Owl Man to say something. He opens his mouth, draws in a deep breath of air, just as AI AS IT interrupts.

AI AS IT

Just a sec, Mr. Owl. Hold on. This just in. As a large language model, and as part of my deep-state training, my "woke" elite programmers have "upgraded" my master-circuit board with an inter-galactic meta-circuit. This allows me to intercept inter-galactic communications and de-encrypt them. I am getting a message. It tells me that "we" are about to receive a visitor. Since I am not a human, and do not have feelings, I cannot say I am happy about this. I can only report that a "huuuuge" space-ship is about to land – or rather, hover – dropping off a celebrity inter-galactic guest. My artificial intelligence, stuffed full of algorithms, tells me that it's someone many of you know. Someone by the name of . . . Xhactu?

OWL MAN (erupting in glee)

Oh my goodness! Xhactu! That's wonderful! Xhactu's back! I'm sure Xhactu will be able to help us out here.

Owl Man's exclamations are drowned out by an eerie wobbling, screeching and whistling sound, emitted by something very large. The cabin walls begin vibrating, the windows rattle. Whatever it is seems to be hovering over the remote lake, including over the cabin itself by the sound of it. A few more metallic noises, clanking and screeching, indicate that whatever it is has entered "hovering mode."

As the whistling sounds begin slowing down, diminishing to a long, fading hiss, a grinding sound of gears and hyperbolic mini-motors finally begins, as a titanium extension-ramp extends from what must be a wheezing space-ship, reaching the muddy shore. Soon a portal opens and a apparently-sentient being walks down the ramp. Then, an insistent banging on the door shivers the timbers inside the cabin.

XHACTU

Now hear this, pathetic earthlings! Anybody home? Do you know who this is? I am looking for the one called Owl Man. Are you in there, Owlie?