

Creative (Non)Fiction

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Creative (Non)Fiction

by [freneticfloetry](#)

Summary

Abed writes what he knows. And some other stuff, which may or may not end well.

Notes

Sadly, characters don't belong to me. Huge thanks to my go-to folks: Kristin, Gretchen, and Sara (and to Aile, who won't know why). And to my recipient - you're the first pinch hit I've ever managed to snag! - I apologize in advance, as this is more than a little cracktastic.

Abed has plans for spring semester. Plans that involve story and genre and three-act structure, as part of his Screenwriting "Master" Class. The professor's big claim to fame is a rewrite credit on *Masters of the Universe*, but he'd also pitched one of the *Puppetmaster* sequels – maybe the holiday special – so what Abed thought was a typo was actually a clever pun with punctuation. Or so Professor Norris had said.

When the professor goes down in a raid on a rogue cock fighting ring – which isn't, it turns out, a euphemism for anything – the only class with space left that fulfills the film track's lit credit is Creative Writing.

Professor Morrow is somewhere between Zelda from *Hello Again* and Zandra from *Friends*, frizzy and free-spirited, if slightly disgruntled, and Abed sits silently in the back while she talks about scope. It's only the first assignment, but it counts for twenty percent of his grade.

"Write me something that stirs the soul," she cries. "An opus! A short story of staggering genius."

Accomplishing an opus would be a lot easier if his only point of reference didn't involve Richard Dreyfus.

Professor Morrow heads him off on his way out the door. "You looked worried for a while there," she says, and puts a hand on his arm. "Someone once asked Dylan Thomas how to write well. He simply replied, 'love the words.'"

"Words are intangible," Abed answers, and she squeezes.

"Just... write what you know."

Term date: Spring 2011. Greendale. The final option. These are the exploits of the Spanish Study Group.

A relatively short time ago, in a study room not far away... from you, the reader. I'm actually there now.

He's been camped out in the library for hours by the time the group starts trickling in, Pierce out of his casts and Shirley with a new brownie recipe ("They're turtles! But not real ones.") and Annie hot on Jeff's heels.

Abed's pretty sure that Jeff had a spring semester plan in place, too – one that involved doing as little as possible, just like all of Jeff's other plans before they go horribly wrong. This week's wrong is Annie, who's made standing between Jeff and academic fraud her Ethics

class project (something that apparently involves a shared Botany lab and shadowing him wherever he goes).

It has all the makings of a Very Special Lesson, but blood may be shed in the process.

Pierce mutters something about Abed crafting his suicide bomber letters at home, but Jeff just looks between him and the mountain of crumpled paper at his feet and raises an eyebrow.

"Something you'd care to share with the class?"

Abed balls up his latest attempt and sets his pen aside. "I have to write a story."

"Oh!" Shirley pushes over the plate of brownies. "What *kind* of story?"

"About us," Abed answers, chewing thoughtfully while everyone else stops to blink. "Like fanfiction. But the beginning is problematic."

"The 'us' part is problematic," Jeff says, and Annie glares at him.

"That sounds like fun, Abed." Her eyes suddenly brighten, and she claps her hands together. "Do I get to be Wonder Woman?"

"I'm supposed to write what I know," he says, frowning. "But I know both everything and nothing. It's a paradox."

"You know that we're *not fictional characters*." Jeff looks around the table, spreading his hands. "No one else sees a problem with this?"

"Fanfiction," Pierce says, looking confounded. "That's all the Kirk and Spock nonsense, right?"

Four mouths open to answer, but Dean Pelton slips in the back door, his fingers steepled and his smile a little shaky.

"Jeffrey," he greets, leaning to the table original *Law & Order* style (Orbach, not Waterston). "May I ask where you were between the hours of eight and eight-oh-seven this morning?"

Jeff pretends to ponder for approximately two seconds longer than Abed would've guessed. "The late stages of REM sleep?"

"I see. And can anyone verify your whereabouts?"

"No one I want associated with this school."

"Well." The Dean pats the tabletop, smoothing out one of Abed's false starts and fiddling with his pen. "If anyone has any information about the missing coolers of O-negative and the gently-used male nurse uniform that disappeared from last night's Blind Date Blood Drive, you know where to find me."

He crosses paths with Troy and Britta as he exits, and Troy looks around in confusion, which is his default state before second breakfast.

"What'd we miss?"

"Dean Pelton thinks I'm a black market vampire," Jeff says, "and Abed's writing fanfiction. About us." Since Troy is clearly a lost cause, he looks to Britta for solidarity. "Longhand."

She finally spies all the discarded paper and looks suitably disgusted. "*Abed.*"

Troy slides into his seat and leans over the table, cramming a brownie into his mouth, clearly unfazed. "You thinking what I'm thinking?"

Abed nods. "Spitstraw ammunition."

"*Sweet.* "

Britta's ranting about recycling and Jeff looks moderately appeased, and no one but Abed notices the message Dean Pelton left behind, scrawled on the scrap of *Battlestar Galactica*: "My office. Come alone."

He doesn't know anything about the blood drive burglary, but Annie might make a decent Buffy.

She materializes on the outskirts of the midday class crowd and narrows her cerulean orbs against the sun. A campus full of people, unaware of the evil that lurks in the shadows. Perched on the edge of the apocalypse.

And she's the only one who can stop it.

The Dean knows his fanfiction.

He'd laid out the ground rules – know your characters, introduce conflict, never end anything with "rocks fall, people die" (even though that had been a major plot point in the new *Trek*) – and pointed Abed in the direction of all sorts of resources in the name of research. Abed had taken notes. At some point, he'd have to look up Rule 34.

One thing was clear – using an outside canon as a plot crutch was the wrong approach. He needed a new strategy. *The Community College Chronicles*, with a twist.

He finds his twist in the library, crouched in a corner, reading *Sunshine* in fingerless gloves below the single row of fantasy selections. Too bad he's ruled out vampires.

The rest of the group stops when they see her, which is exactly the reaction he's going for. He's a fan of the white streaks – very Rogue, early in the *Ultimate* run – but worried that the contacts were too much.

"Abed?" Shirley asks, tentatively taking a step forward. "Who's this?"

"My OC," he says. "I needed a heroine."

"That's nice." She smiles politely, but Jeff has a hand on his head and Annie is wearing her politically-correct face. "Does she have a name?"

"Still undecided – it needs to properly convey her power. I've narrowed it down to Soleil Shadow Rain and Princess Phoenix Katana. Or Mary Sue. On the nose, but I kind of like it."

Troy pulls his eyebrows together. "What if she was the Shadow chick, but she *had* a katana?"

Abed tilts his head to one side. "That could work."

"Right?"

"Okay." Jeff's hand hovers near her back until she gets out of his chair. "Why don't you go track down your unicorn and we'll pick this up later," he says, steering her out the door. "Buh-bye."

Annie wanders to her seat and sets her books down, looking as destroyed as it gets when you're talking about Annie (which is somewhere in the range of a mildly-depressed Care Bear).

"You needed a heroine? What happened to Wonder Woman?"

"Oh don't get your underoos in a bunch," Jeff says, sitting. "And quit encouraging him."

Britta comes over to stand at the head of the table – her go-to position when she's challenging Jeff for power. "Guys, this is an assignment. We are a study group. He shouldn't feel like he has to go outside this group for help. Even if it's weird for a while, I think we have a responsibility to Abed to make this work."

Jeff narrows his eyes. "You *read* fanfiction, don't you?"

She squirms for a second, then squares her shoulders. "For your information, some fanfiction happens to be a very reliable source of positive female characterization in male-dominated canons. But that's so not the point." Moving behind Abed's chair, she puts her hands on his shoulders, and for a minute it's scary, all the support from out of nowhere. Maybe she's trying to make up for Claymation Christmas, but he feels a little like The Manchurian Candidate. "What do you need, Abed?"

"I need to know my characters," he explains. "But all characters are archetypes, made up of various tropes. And I already know you guys. So I need to find a genre. And come up with a story. And maybe a Symphony bar."

"Toffee?" Troy asks.

"Always."

Troy nods and heads for the door. "On it."

Pierce and Shirley finally sit down, Britta squeezes his shoulders, and Jeff just shakes his head. "This is nuts."

"I'll say," Pierce scoffs. "You mean there's no Kirk *anywhere*?"

There's a bottle of bad scotch in his desk and bombshell of a blonde at his door, and he can't decide which one's deadlier. But he reaches for the booze to deal with the blonde – of all the study rooms in all the world, she had to wander into his.

"Mr. Winger, I presume." She slips out of her coat and into his chair, flashing him more leg than smile. "I'm in need of a private dick."

"It's not all that private," he says, taking a long swallow, "but you've come to the right place."

As genres go, noir should've been a sure thing – visual language, dynamic dialogue, McGuffin in the form of Annie's latest missing pen (pink this time, and just as gone) – but Britta doesn't seem to be a fan.

"Remember what I said about fanfiction and positive portrayals of women?" She shakes her head and squeezes her eyes shut, shuddering. "Not what I meant."

Abed suspects that she's overreacting, but she tears the paper into little pieces and tears those pieces into even smaller pieces and doesn't even mention recycling, so he's probably wrong.

*In a world without credibility, one man stands on the edge of expulsion. He is... Winger.**

**No relation to the bad hair band.*

"Why does Jeff get to be the hero?" Pierce exclaims. "And who let him in here?"

Abed looks over at Chang, who's pulled the machine monitor's chair out of the copy room and squeezed into the corner next to Shirley.

"Jeff isn't the Hero," Abed says, "he's the Anti-Hero. Apathetic, morally grey, general problem with authority. Side of Deadpan Snarker." He shrugs and sips his smoothie. "Chang's a Self-Insert. Like Buddy, with a bigger arc."

Shirley scoots to her right and frowns at Chang, who's munching on a marbled brownie.

"Did you handcuff yourself to the table?"

"Four hours of my pop and lock fierceness," he says, and Zorro-snaps in her face. "I don't give up the goodies for free."

When he finally breaks, clutching her picture, the first tear rolls down his face like a freight train of emotion. "I don't understand," he sobs. "Why do bad things happen to good monkeys?"

"Shhh," she croons, pulling him close and stroking his hair. "She's in a better place now. Where the bananas are always ripe and she can fling her poo wherever she wants to."

Abed blinks at Troy's face full of outrage. "Hurt/comfort is a perfectly legitimate genre."

"Dude. You can't kill Annie's Boobs!"

"But then he gets human Annie's actual boobs," Abed says. "That's the whole point."

Her hands fumble with the buttons before he impatiently brushes them away. "Too long," he says, ripping the shirt open even though it's Armani. "Why haven't we done this before?"

"Why are we doing it now?" she asks, and yanks her sweater over her head.

Annie bites her lip. "The sheer number of times my boobs seem to make an appearance is a little disturbing."

"There's that," Jeff says. "And I don't recall soft-core porn being part of the assignment."

Abed shrugs. "I decided to base it on actual events."

"In what alternate universe has any of this ever happened?"

"Alternate universe was the last one. Pierce had amnesia, but he thought I'd given him Alzheimer's. This is from yesterday, in the lab. With the sex pollen."

"In the..." Jeff groans, slumping down the back of his seat. "That wasn't *sex pollen*. That was Starburns' secret stash, which turned out to be *poison oak*."

"We had to strip for the emergency shower," Annie adds helpfully.

"A plant made you get naked," Abed says, undaunted. "Sex pollen."

Insert Tab A into Slot B. Shake repeatedly.

"I give up," Abed declares, tossing his pen down. "Everybody's gay."

Britta's hand goes up immediately. "I call Annie."

He's frowning down at a blank sheet of paper when Shirley comes in.

"Abed? Can I talk to you for a moment?" He pushes the paper away, and she settles into Britta's chair and puts her bag on the table. "How's the story coming?"

"I'm blocked. It happens."

"I know something that might help," Shirley singsongs, but Abed just shakes his head.

"I tried Jesus already," he says. "It didn't end well." He turns in his chair to face her. "Sorry you've been missing in action. After the pirate thing, I didn't think you'd want anymore starring roles."

"How did Jeff get *wings* when I didn't even have both my legs?" she asks hotly. "But I was going to suggest something else. Do you know what story is always timeless?"

He pauses and pulls out the most Shirley-centric answer he can think of. "The bible?"

"Boy, would you forget Jesus for one damn minute?" she snaps. Then she puts a hand over her heart and mouths an apology – like the three-second rule, but with religion – so it must not really count. "A fairy tale, Abed. Fairy tales never get old. And do you know why?"

He nods. "Because of the magic. And sometimes the body parts."

"Because of the *journey*."

"But we don't go anywhere."

She takes a deep breath and puts on her "Lord Help Me" face, and he thinks that maybe he's missing the point.

"Fairy tales are about starting in one place and ending in another," she says, extra-patiently. "That's the journey. The heroes of fairy tales are all on a mission, Abed. They find something they weren't looking for, and they become better people. Whether or not there's magic, whatever the moral of the story may be, there's always a journey."

Reaching into her bag while he turns the words over in his head, she pulls out a foil-wrapped square. "I brought you a brownie."

"Is it a special brownie?"

"No, just chocolate. Sometimes we make things too complicated." She gets up and pats him on the cheek. "Know who else is missing in all of your stories? You."

He peers up at her thoughtfully. "Usually you're the Team Mom," he says, "but today you're kind of the Magical Negro."

Shirley smiles, but it's confused. "That's..." she starts, and finally gives up, puts her bag on her shoulder, and leaves.

He sits for a long time, chewing.

It's a very good brownie.

Once upon a time, in a land very much like this one, there lived an invisible boy. His mother was a ghost and his father was made of gold, and the boy set out on his own, in search of a way to be seen.

This is the story of how he found his family.

Abed contemplates the paper and its big blue 'A' until Troy flops down on the couch.

"I think it needs a sequel," he says.

"Didn't you try everything already?" Troy asks. "But you know what would be cool? If we were cartoons."

"We could be in space."

Troy's eyes widen. "We could be *cartoons in space*."

"We could be telepathically linked."

"Does that really work?" He stuffs his face full of Pringles, and Abed raises an eyebrow.

I don't know. Does it?

Troy chokes on his chips, and Abed pats him on the back. "Sorry. Leftover from that ventriloquy class." He brushes the crumbs off his lap, considering their remaining options.

"Zombie apocalypse?"

They look at each other, then shake their heads.

"Never happen."

"Not in a million years."

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