

On the Good Ship Laughingstock

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On the Good Ship Laughingstock

by [Merlin Missy_\(mtgat\)](#)

Summary

They tried to piece together the memories from the show that didn't exist. Then Janice started posting.

Notes

Specific warnings in end notes, written as a treat for SailorHathor in Yuletide 2012

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

If you asked Necker, and no one ever did, the best threads on the board were (in no particular order) the porn threads, the "what pisses you off most" threads, and the nostalgia TV threads. The porn wasn't always good porn, but it was enough to get off to. Necker was always pissed off at something and found comfort in fellow souls who felt the same. And TV was TV, and old TV was always better than the new shit they tried to show these days. The Superfriends may have sucked huge donkey dick even back in the day, but it was their show sucking their dicks. Or something.

The best threads were the obscure threads. Can you name the most outlandish cartoon you ever watched? And can someone else verify it existed? The board was almost as old as IMDB, and the rules said checking was cheating. Not like you could force someone to obey, Necker knew, but the board members had the grubby honor code of fellow masturbators everywhere. The '80s kids had their Saturday morning *Rubik*, *the Amazing Cube*, and the '90s kids had that fuck-awful *Histeria!* But Necker was a '70s kid, born in late 1966, and the best obscure show of all time was *Candle Cove*.

"I had a dream about the Skin-Taker last night," posted Sheldy. Necker was sure most of Sheldy's dreams were made up on the spot. "He and Horace were chasing me."

Lemon replied, "Fuck that, I dreamed about Janice last night." Lemon was a perv.

Candle Cove threads went long and late into the night every damn time. Necker remembered pieces: the shape of the *Laughingstock*'s bow, the curve of Janice's neck as she screamed. Fuck that show. But the threads were impossible to resist, and together, the core six of them tossed around what they could recall.

"Do you remember the one about the dog?"

"I keep thinking of that kid. Bobby? Ricky? The one who drowned."

"Yeah. I don't remember anything except how white his eyes looked while he floated there after Janice rolled him over in the water."

"Janice kept crying," Lemon posted with a drooling emoticon. Necker thought Lemon jerked it to thinking about Janice crying, the sicko.

As their Google ranking went up, others drifted to the board. The porn went up in quality, then sharply down, and stopped being worth hosting, not with the perves trying to post kiddie pics every other thread. Necker shut the porn threads down for good. Lemon left soon after that, without saying goodbye or even fuck you all. He just stopped posting, and when Necker tossed him a test email months later, nothing came back. Eh. Fucker.

The *Candle Cove* threads grew. More posters, names and anons both, brought their memories. The '70s kids new and old had slowly pieced together episodes from both seasons, placing them in rough order and standing back to stare at the freaky shit their parents had let them watch. One of the new folks, LittleGal, started using an icon with the same porcelain baby doll head that Pirate Percy had, and fuck if Necker didn't wake up in cold sweats three nights

in a row thinking about that icon. Fan artists posted sketches of the *Laughingstock*. Nobody could find screengrabs or clips to compare, but everyone could tell when they were right. The best artist was CalmBlue, they all agreed.

CalmBlue stopped posting all of a sudden, and Necker did try to track them down, with no luck.

Necker wasn't obsessed, but wasn't it weird that IMDB didn't have any listings? And why were all the YouTube clips pulled for DMCA before anyone commented? The conspiracy theory threads were fucking stupid, but....

A new poster named PirateLady started replying to the *Candle Cove* threads. Suddenly, the last couple of details they'd been debating became clear: the Siren episode, the way the ship's rigging looked exactly like bones and the sail made of skin. PirateLady knew it all.

Even before she came clean about who she was, it was like they all already knew. "I played Janice."

She didn't have many memories of filming the show, she said. She was just a kid, and it all took place around the time her parents were killed. "I blocked out a lot of those two years," she admitted.

(It was murder. Necker found the newspaper clippings, once Janice told them her hometown. A break-in, a killer with a knife and a twisted appetite. Her real name was Jade, and according to the newspaper she was asleep in the next room the whole time. After Janice stopped posting, Sheldy hacked into the police report and emailed the handful of them who cared everything he could find, including the old crime scene photos. Then Necker had to wonder how a nine year old girl had slept through her parents screaming for hours as they died slowly at the hands of that sick fucker.)

Necker got an email from someone claiming to be CalmBlue's husband.

"She passed away," the email said. "It was sudden. Thank you for being her friend." Generic, heartfelt, and not responding to replies.

At Christmas, Necker brought the show up between Charlie Brown and the Grinch, and David, who was two years older, laughed and said, "God, you used to run home to sit in front of a staticky screen every damn day," and Mom agreed. Dad shrugged, and said get off the fucking computer, it's fucking Christmas.

Necker lurked more than posted on the *Candle Cove* threads, but on New Year's Day, could not shut up about it. Every thread, every question: do you know someone else irl who watched? Did anyone else see?

Was it real?

Sheldy didn't post. LittleGal didn't post. All the regulars were gone, but the noobs would talk. Fourteen hours of posts later, there was a post from PirateLady. "It was real."

"WB, Janice."

"Janice!"

"PL," posted Necker, "u sure?"

"I was there."

And that was that. But Necker had bad dreams that night, and the next, and sleeping became something other people did. Coffee was a fine substitute and night was for seeking out the other places on the Net with other people who remembered this fucking series. Dreams were for listening to the Skin-Taker scream and scream and scream.

Fuck.

But sleep had other purposes, and trying to drive when you haven't slept for a week is a fucking awful idea. Necker tried to stay awake, but a second later, there was Horace Horrible and that fucking monocle and only the blare of horns worked to wake back up in time to see the headlights rushing forward.

And there was the *Laughingstock*, all open mouth at the water, and there was the voice: "You have to go INSIDE." And there was Lemon, and CalmBlue, and so many others who'd watched, chained up to the oars because every ship needs a crew. Jade's mother and father rowed together, even with the skin flayed from their abused bodies. They smiled. Everyone smiled. Even LittleGal, whose head was half-severed, and Sheldy, whose face was smashed in.

Pirate Percy said, "We're waiting for Janice, it won't be long now. Then we'll sail!"

"Sit down, child," said the Skin-Taker. "Sit and row forever."

Necker tried to scream but the awful hand came out and covered all the screams.

End Notes

Warnings: implied gore and violence consistent with horror genre/creepypasta, including but not limited to character death and past violent murder including unspecified acts on a child

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