

Implosion

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Implosion: The Fanzine that proves anyone can publish a fanzine.
Member, fwa.

He Said I Was Too Sercon to Love!
by Stephanie C

My life was so wonderful before it happened. So wonderful in the wonderful little Midwest town in which I lived with my husband Truphan and our wonderful 12-year-old twins, Les and Es.

I will never forget the day it started. I went to the market, and they had just sold out of their last copy of *Penthouse Forum*. I looked and looked, even behind the other magazines, but I just couldn't find out. It was when I was looking in the digest rack that I saw the familiar logo.

It was **Analog**. The Hard Stuff. Heavy science, hold the love scene. My hand involuntarily recoiled. I stood in front of the supermarket newsstand, unable to leave, yet afraid to stay.

This was Forbidden Territory. The cover called to me, drawing me to it with memories of teenage nights of passionate science fiction reading. I read a book a day back then, and all of it science fiction.

I had always felt that Truphan and I had a cosmically slannish relationship, but he would never accept something as unfannish as reading science fiction. Even I got a little queasy at the thought of all those smoking rockets, all that engineerish philosophy.

I smiled at the thought of my wonderful husband and co-editor. He was no copyshop boy! My mind drifted to thoughts of intimate evenings of marathon collating. That would be a thing of the past if I picked up the magazine. Still, I lingered next to the display.

Five years earlier, Truphan had rescued me from a life of chasing "Star Trek" cast members for autographs and long conversations with Jerry Pournelle.

He found me in the huckster room. I was trying to decide between a first-edition "Door into Summer" and "Shatner: My Story" when I felt a gentle tap. "Get your hand off my ass!" I said as I whirled to face him.

He did, and we began to talk as we walked through the room. There was something about him that made me want to be closer to him. I think it was the wild look in his eyes and his sensitive fannish face.

I tried to tell him about my favorite authors, but he seemed totally disinterested in whether Raymond

Feist or Fred Saberhagen is better. When he stopped staring at my "I'm A Babylonian" teeshirt, I was afraid he would just walk away.

He perked up a little when I mentioned the latest novel by Gregory Benford. Truphan claimed to know Dr. Benford. "He carries a gun, you know," Tru told me confidentially. "I think it's for unruly critics." Then he mentioned a lot of other science fiction writers, some still not middle aged, and said he knew them, too.

When I tried to discuss their novels, though, he changed the subject! Tru explained that he didn't read science fiction, but he knew them through something called fanzines.

He began to tell me about publishing fanzines in excited tones. His excitement was contagious. I wanted to join this select circle.

A whole new world opened to me that day at the convention. Tru introduced me to some of his friends, all of whom seemed to collect pipes and lighters as a side-hobby. They were flamboyant, funny and fascinating.

I went home after the convention, packed my bags, and drove to Tru's home town where he was waiting for me at the door. We held hands all afternoon, waiting for the moving men to arrive with my belongings.

"What are all these boxes?" Tru asked me when the moving men had left.

"My science fiction books and magazines."

His face went ashen. Our first day together, and I had shocked and offended him!

I burst into tears. "What's wrong?" I cried. "What's wrong?"

"It's that sci-fi stuff," he said, putting an arm made brawn by decades of hand-cranking. "We don't mess with science fiction Stephanie.."

"But why, oh why?" I couldn't stop blubbering and shaking.

"It takes time away from important pursuits, like writing, editing and publishing fanzines," Tru whispered to me as he stroked my hair and tried to calm me. "We are fannish fanzine fans, and that is what we do."

That day I vowed to turn away from the sercon path. I left all the books and magazines in their cartons and donated them to the N3F.

It wasn't easy to break the habit, but Tru stood by me. And with his strength to support mine, I soon became capable of passing a newsstand without browsing the shelves.

Then one day, in Borders Bookstore, I met and passed my sternest test. I walked right past the mammoth science

fiction book display, bought a picture book of lesbian love-making and left with so much as cracking the cover of an SF book.

How happy I was when Tru came home from a hard day of washing dishes! "I've beaten it!" I shouted as I flew into his arms. "I've beaten it!"

The future seemed so bright then. But now I teetered on the edge of damnation. I stared into the abyss of uncontrollable science fiction enthusiasm -- and it captured me body and soul. Guiltily, furtively, I scooped up the magazine. Then, out of embarrassment at what I had done, I grabbed a copy of *Spin* and put it on top of the smaller publication.

How I cringed with shame when the checkout girl whipped the **Analog** over the scanner as she said, "Oh, a reader of probing stories of technological extrapolation!" Did she have to tell the whole store?

I went home and locked myself in the bathroom with the copy of **Analog**. I read it, every word, cover to cover. I didn't stop until I had devoured every short story and the feature novella.

As I finished reading the surprising conclusion of the last story, I heard the unmistakable sounds of Tru arriving home.

I knew he mustn't discover me with **Analog**. I was in a panic, uncertain what to do. Finally, I rushed into the den and hid the magazine under a stack of **Fosfax** we used to even out the TV table.

I sighed with relief as I went to meet Tru. I could read my science fiction occasionally, and he need never know. <y idyllic life would go on as it was. I could be a fabulous fannish fan *and* a sercon science fiction reader.

It sounded so easy to me, but it wasn't. I bought another **Analog** a couple of weeks later "just to finish the serial," I told myself. It couldn't hurt. I could as easily hide two magazines as one.

But then, the very next Tuesday, I went on my first binge. I don't know what happened. I walked into a Read More center for a *TV Guide* and came out with two bags of science fiction books and magazines. I even bought *Science Fiction Age* and *Sci-Fi Universe*.

I couldn't stop. When the local cable service added the Science Fiction Channel, it threw me over the edge. I became a total, degenerate sercon fan.

I think Tru suspected something was wrong even before the explosion. He saw me toss aside **Apparatchik** without even opening the envelope. I began missing deadlines for our fanzines.

I continued to put up a front, outwardly the same fannish fan I had been since meeting Tru.

Then it happened, and my tidy little world splintered into jagged shards. I was sitting on the living room sofa, surrounded by the results of my last trip to ReadMore, when Tru came in the door!

"What's this?" he thundered as he stared at the Jack Chalker novel lying open on the coffee table.

I tried to bluff my way out of it, as I had been able to do several times before. "I'm research a

Brandonization," I said as casually as I could manage.

"No one parodies science fiction stories any more!" He screamed at me.

Then it all came pouring out. The magazines. The books. The episodes of "Dr. Who."

It was a long and terrible night for me and for Truphan.

And as the wonderful new day dawned, he held me tenderly. "We'll beat this thing, together," he murmured as he held me close.

I've been back from rehab at the Richard Wayne Brown Science-Illustory Fandation for six weeks now. I'm still shaky. I know it. They made me realize that I can't just watch "Deep Space Nine" like ordinary fans. It was hard for me, but I eventually came to realize that I had an illness, an addiction, that would dog me for the rest of my life.

I don't know if I will ever regain my perfect, fanzine fan life, but I am going to try. And perhaps with Truphan's support and my new-found faith in Ghu, I will.