The Circular Screen (for Debbie)

Edward Garner

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A SHORT FANTASY

The Circular Screen [for Debbie]

by Edward Garner

Brazil nut a capella Franky still I can't figure what's buggin you - I don't know she said it like a dream floats over my head and I could not bring myself to believe she was really mine once not too many years ago I thought she looked like Gina Lollabrigida in that Rock Hudson film where she threw a high heeled shoe at me and I ducked into her closet waiting to ambush her when she walked into the room I snuck up behind and kissed her neck was so soft perfume filled my head WOW her body felt divine pressed to me but it wasn't my fault she got lost instead I heard the wind just howl when I opened that door clouds flew overhead a star looked orange like Venus sometimes when I can't sleep a late show does the trick.

“Good evening. Welcome to the Circular Screen.”

The movies on the Circular Screen spin slowly until they dissipate into a twisting mass of color. Suddenly - through an instantaneous flash - a single picture emerges to fill the entire face of the screen.

Throwing his cape back over his shoulders, a masked man kneels to open a vault. He finishes the combination and a universe explodes - shattering into fragments which dissolve and become yellow light is blinding. The robot's head fills the screen and pierces the siren screams. Hideous people channel into the room. Throwing his cape back over his shoulders, a masked man walks into the room I snuck up behind and kissed her neck was so soft perfume filled my head WOW her body felt divine pressed to me but it wasn't my fault she got lost instead I heard the wind just howl when I opened that door clouds flew overhead a star looked orange like Venus sometimes when I can't sleep a late show does the trick.

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Throwing his cape back over his shoulders, a masked man kneels to open a vault. He finishes the combination and a piercing siren screams. Hideous people channel into the room. A robot, whose half head is paired with a flashing yellow light, stalks mechanically forward. The masked man reels to escape. The robot comes closer. His flashing head grows larger. The yellow light is blinding. The robot's head fills the screen and explodes - shattering into fragments which dissolve and become space - stars - a universe.

(Words appear upon the starlit face of the screen)

Milky Way Productions Presents:
An Evening With William Shakespeare

“Well, here we are at stage side. All the critics in the Western World have gathered here tonight for this truly great moment in literary history, as William Shakespeare has agreed to answer a few questions. Hopefully, a great many controversies will be resolved that have bedeviled critics for literally centuries. You can feel the intensity. And now William Shakespeare is stepping out of the time machine! Just listen to that applause! He's walking to the beautiful throne at stage center, and every bit a king, he raises his arms to quieten this enthused crowd!”

CRITIC: Mr. Shakespeare - On behalf of Critics Association World Wide - Welcome.
Wait Mr. Shakespeare! Did you really poach deer. . . .

The Circular Screen focuses on the screen as Shakespeare vanishes. It is only a wooden chair. Voices speak in the background. The screen backs away from the wooden chair revealing a courtroom.

“Superman will rise and approach the bench.”

Yes - in today's world - even for the man of steel - one must pay for his crimes against society.

The day before, Superman had been making his rounds in fair Metropolis, when suddenly - “Great Krypton! That train is derailing!!”

But as the man of steel was about to prevent the train from crashing into the river - “Oh no! - A Russian missile headed for the center of Metropolis. I must divert it or everyone will die.” But as Superman streaked towards the missile, it burned itself out. Returning to the site of the derailed train, an innocent bystander was talking to a policeman.

“That’s right officer, I watched Superman let the train crash into the river. He just flew away. Superman, you are a dirty beast.”

“But... ...but.”

The officer slapped handcuffs on Superman. “No buts about it Superpig, I got plenty of witnesses to haul you in, you murderer.”

“But officer!”

“Shut up Superjerk, I always did figure you for a louse.” And as Superman stood in front of the bench...

“I - I guess that officer was right. I am responsible for the lives of all those people on that train.”

The Judge read the verdict.

“Superman, I sentence you to death.”

Suddenly! - from a secret door in front of the judge's bench a great ball of Kryptonite rolled out and landed on Superman. As the man of steel lay gasping in the courtroom the judge and spectators surrounded him. Superman peered up at the judge who pulled off a mask.

“That's right Superdummy - it's your old pal - Lex. And this time you're finished!”

“But - gasp - what about the train - gasp.”

“Ha Ha Ha - you oaf - that train was just a dummy. Nobody was on it. But you couldn't see because that phony missile you chased down burned red Kryptonite for fuel and you lost your X-ray vision!”

As the man of steel lies gasping with a ball of green Kryptonite on his chest, the Circular Screen zooms in on Lex Luther's Timex. 5:15.

The screen backs away from the watch. Methuselah lowered his wrist and gazed into the setting sun.

The sky was streaked with Cirrus clouds whose spiraling filaments sailed delicately overhead. Today Methuselah would watch Cirrus invading the sky and he hoped this would be the sunset beyond all others; beyond all doubt. “It is so confusing,” he mused, “each second the sunset changes. If I turn away for only a moment I may miss what I have been looking for.”

The sun set upon the horizon and Methuselah checked his equipment. Everything was functioning perfectly. Pink spirals twisted in the blue and purple ships sailed in the distance. Methuselah remembered a Cirrus set he had seen years before

and the memory brought him near tears as he recalled the spirals appearing as Mother Mary in flowing robes of angels' hair and the pink pastel colors had soothed him nearly into a trance. He recalled once upon a river's bank he watched the water turn to pools of precious gems and the river streaked in blankets of sparkling orange and blue that reminded him of a sunfish belly and there were pools of emerald green splashed with amethyst and where the river meandered were ribbons of orange and green and pink. Overhead the sky was masked in spirals. Methuselah wondered, had he made the right choice in coming here? “Perhaps tomorrow,” he thought, “I will see Cumulus in cluster.”

Hovering lower than the other clouds, a purple lizard lashed its tongue across the sky. Methuselah thought, “Surely I have never seen a cloud such as this.” And as he marveled, he was taken by the lashing tongue into the mouth of the lizard-and he disappeared.

The lizard spins slowly on the Circular Screen and dissipates into a twisting mass of color.

The Circular Screen hopes you enjoyed the show. Goodnight.

Goodnight I told her in my sleep she loves me like we used to park behind the boyscout camp she brought a different nightgown each time we made love I got a bobby-pin collection still.