

CASTER'S BLOG

A GEEK LOVE STORY

AS TOLD TO
MARCUS ALEXANDER HART

This document contains a short excerpt from Marcus Alexander Hart's *Caster's Blog: A Geek Love Story*.

If you would like to read this book in its entirety, you may download it as a free ebook at CastersBlog.com.

For more information about Marcus and his books, please visit MarcusAlexanderHart.com.



Saturday, March 13, 2004 - 8:38 p.m.

The Jet Ski and the Shadoe

Current mood: giddy

Comments: 0

I just had the most amazing day ever. Its retelling runs kind of long, so I'm going to summarize it with an enticing haiku:

Jet ski incident
Beautiful girl named Shadoe
Now I squint blindly

Okay, so this morning I went out to Siesta Key to that jet ski place that Turbo Dan told me about. Of course I didn't really expect him to show up, but since I was already planning on going to go to Siesta Beach of my own free will, I figured why not give him the benefit of the doubt?

Much to my shock and amazement, right on time Turbo Dan's rusty old Jeep comes rambling into the parking lot! He's at the wheel, looking like something out of *Lost in Space* in this weird short-sleeved ribbed wetsuit thing, and in the passenger seat... in the passenger seat was a breathtakingly radiant angel...

My God. I don't know how he does it. Every time *I've* ever gone to an auto parts store I've always ended up talking to some big fat redneck dude who tries to convince me that I need to change my spark plugs and oil and engine block, even though I just came in for an air freshener. Turbo Dan goes to buy a new headlight, and he comes out with a beach blanket beauty queen. Such is the nature of fate, I guess.

They get out of the car and Turbo Dan is like, "Hey man, this is Shadoe, that chick I was telling you about." (I would later find it's spelled "Shadoe" like Shadoe Stevens, and not "Shadow" like my ex-cat.)

Let me try to describe Shadoe using my limited vocabulary and sprawling knowledge of pop culture: First try to imagine what Christina Aguilera might look like in an alternate universe where she was the all-American girl-next-door instead of a skeezy ho. Petite, lightly tanned, glowing. Her hair was a mass of a thousand dreadlocky, pale blond braids, vaguely reminiscent of those albino twins from *The Matrix: Reloaded*. Her eyes were like two emeralds set in '80s throwback blue eye shadow, and her teeth were perfect and white and Photoshopy like something out of an Aquafresh advertisement. She was wearing a pair of Daisy Dukes, a green flannel shirt, and a blazing don't-shoot-me-I'm-a-hunter orange bikini top.

For lack of any other coherent thought at that moment, I was like, "Enchanted to meet you, Shadoe. I once had a cat that went by that name." Before I could feel too stupid, she graciously giggled and said, "That's a strange coincidence, I once had a manta named Ray."

So the plan was that we would each rent our own jet ski, and then zoom around the bay, chasing each other around and whatever. But when the time came to actually rent them, we realized that jet ski rental isn't cheap like bicycle rental. In fact, it's EXPENSIVE AS HELL! We didn't have enough money to rent three, or even two, so we decided to just get one and take turns riding it. Lame.

So we all put on these mildewy life jackets and the rental guy starts up the jet ski. I've never ridden one before and was a little nervous, so I volunteered Turbo Dan to go first. As soon as he mounted it Shadoe kicks off her chunky pink sandals and was like, "Hey! It's a two-person! I want to ride with you!" So she jumps on and takes Turbo Dan by his Spandexed waist, and they go ripping off across the water.

I just sat there on the dock and waited and watched. I was trying to get some kind of feel for how the thing worked before I got on it. I didn't want to fall off and have to go home all cold and wet. Also I didn't want to look like a dorkass in front of this girl Shadoe.

As the stereotypical surf dude, I assume Turbo Dan had been on a jet ski before. He was doing this thing where he'd slice the tail around and this huge wave would shoot up. I would have thought that he was just doing it to try and get Shadoe soaked, but I don't give Turbo Dan's thought processes that much credit. Every time a boat went by he would gun it perpendicular to the wake and kind of skip the jet ski off the water all ESPN2 style. All the while I could hear Shadoe screaming and giggling in her angelic little voice. She waved to me every time they went by. :-)

After a while, Turbo Dan pulls it back up to the dock and they climb off. He's all like, "Your turn, dude!" So I carefully step onto the thing, and as soon as my foot touches it, it starts to slip away and roll like a log under a Canadian lumberjack. Turbo Dan grabs me by my arm before I plunge into the water. Shadoe giggles. I flush with embarrassment. Rrrrr.

Anyway, I finally get on the roly little bastard and the rental guy shows me how it works. As soon as I'm ready to go, suddenly Shadoe jumps on behind me! Whoa! I had, of course, assumed that I would be on my own. It hadn't occurred to me that it was still a two-person jet ski, and she was still a second person. She grabs on to my hips and is like, "Alright, let's see if you're as fast as your namesake, manta Ray." How could I back down from a challenge like that? I squeezed the accelerator and we blasted away from the dock.

If you've never ridden a jet ski before let me tell you, it's amazing. I now know exactly what it feels like to ride a speeder bike, without Ewok interference. I suppose a motorcycle might be similar, but I think that the smooth surface of the water better simulates the repulsorlift than pavement. But I digress from the mainstream of this evening's symposium: a girl named Shadoe, and the way she was clinging tenaciously to my waist!

As visions of Endor flashed through my head, Shadoe held herself tightly against me. I could feel her body pressing up against my back, I could smell the sweet

aroma of coconut and patchouli oil fluttering off of her skin. It was the most awesome moment that I have ever experienced, ever.

We were coming up on a big cabin cruiser full of rich old people, and Shadoe was all like, "Jump it! Jump it!" I was like, "Hell yeah! Hold on to your butts!" and I put it full throttle into the side of the boat wake, exactly as I had watched Turbo Dan do a dozen times before. Except it didn't happen exactly like it did when Turbo Dan did it. If there's one lesson that I should have learned from my vast library of experiences with Turbo Dan, it's that things NEVER happen for me exactly the way they do for him.

I'm not exactly sure what went wrong, but Turbo Dan would later describe it as the "most incredible wipeout" he'd ever seen. One second I'm king of the world, next thing I know this same world is a featureless blur and I'm soaking wet and cold and coughing up a lungful of salt water. From what Turbo Dan tells me the front of the jet ski hit the water at a weird angle and Shadoe and I just kind of flipped over the side. I don't really know how that's possible, but hey, who am I to doubt the eyewitness credibility of... okay, nevermind.

Anyway, luckily for me, Shadoe wasn't pissed that we had taken a header into the water as a result of my substandard piloting skill. In fact, she was still laughing, despite the fact that the water was really freakin' COLD! I get the impression she's the kind of girl who could have fun at a funeral. Good times. Except for one thing: My glasses were now somewhere at the bottom of Sarasota Bay.

Man, WTF? I was wearing that sport strap and everything, yet somehow when my face hit the water at 30 nautical miles per hour it didn't matter. They were gone. If you're new to my life, let me explain something: I've worn glasses since I was in the 5th grade. I was the first person I knew who had to wear them. Imagine if you will what you, with your normal human eyes, might see if you filled a diving mask with water and *then* put it on. That's what I can see without my glasses. There was no way that I could drive the jet ski back to the dock.

So when we climbed back on the infernal machine and got it started again (there's a bracelet thing on there that cuts the engine when you fall off) Shadoe had to be the driver, and forgive me if you're way ahead of me here, but that makes me the passenger, aka *Holdy McGirltouch*!

We spent another 10 minutes or so cruising around the bay, me holding on to her sculpted pelvis, the gracious chill of the salt water masking the cold sweat flowing from my anxious palms. She was an even more balls-to-the-wall driver than Turbo Dan was, and as she cut circles around the bay I was required (and delighted) to hold her as tightly as I could. It was the second most awesome moment that I have experienced, ever, coming in right behind the one from a half hour before. This was a truly excellent day for me.

Our hour rental hadn't run out yet, but by that time we were so freezing that we went back to the dock and met up with Turbo Dan again. Shadoe wanted to go and

get something to eat, so we all piled into Turbo Dan's Jeep and went to some crappy beach food place. We were still moist and shivering, but we had fun. Shadoe and I shared a basket of chicken fingers. The food sucked, but the company made up for it.

When we were done eating it was about sunset and Turbo Dan drove me home. I had to leave my car on Siesta Key on account of my eyes and their state of near total dysfunction. Shadoe sat in the front seat and she kind of leaned her head on Turbo Dan's shoulder and rubbed it there slowly like... well like my cat Shadow used to do to me. I admit, it made me bristle with jealousy.

Still, I don't know if it was the angry-white-boy punk music on the radio, or the way the dried salt felt on my skin as the open air blew over it, or the fact that I wasn't wearing the ol' Coke bottles, but for some reason I didn't feel like myself. I felt like I was *cool*.

Tomorrow I'll have to somehow get new glasses and then find a way out to Siesta to reclaim my car. I didn't even bother making transportation arrangements with Turbo Dan because, honestly, you and I both know he never would have showed up.

So I guess the day did have a little bit of a down side, but in the end, as I sit here hunched over and squinting two inches from my monitor, I still feel like I was the big winner of today. Today was a truly excellent day. Go me.