

In Google We Trust

“With every mistake we must surely be learning.”

Stan’s eyes are wide open, staring at the newly bought thick black curtains. “It’ll block any light coming from the street” assured the salesman, “you’ll sleep like a baby”. Bull. He still wasn’t sleeping like a baby. He turns around in his bed and stares at the radio alarm clock. 3:05. He puts on his slippers and walks over to the computer, or might I say, The Computer.

3.5Ghz G5, 2Gb of RAM, 1Tb SCSI hard drive, 21-inch flat screen, wireless mouse and keyboard, 14Mbps wifi Internet connection. This work of art represents the pinnacle of consumer technology, and yet its sole function, the function Stan attributed to it is Google.

“I look at you, see all the love there that’s sleeping.”

Google is Stan’s God. Google is Stan’s bible, psychiatrist, orthopedist, buddy, enemy, financial advisor, and many other personalities. As a matter of fact, Google isn’t all these people directly, he (I hope you don’t mind my masculinizing Google) puts Stan in direct contact with the person and profession needed. All for free.

In Google’s search-field history, an avid hacker or a bored guest of his could find the following subjects and questions asked.

“Paul McCartney, dead or alive?”, “Left toe in pain doctor help”, “Guru Zen Buddhism taxes”, “green pimple”, “Cary Grant’s sexuality”, “Why me?”.

“I need a fix ‘cause I’m going down.”

Stan rubs his eyes thoroughly and blinks at the sharp monitor. He stretches his fingers in the air playing “The Entertainer” in his head, and then begins to type. Tonight’s question would be “how to fall asleep”.

12,400 results appear in less than 0,16 seconds. Some Google sponsor is selling “the cure to sleep deprivation” for just \$34.95. But Stan doesn’t go for those bogus solutions. He stays in the free area, the good old search results. He’s learnt to sniff the good ones from the bad ones, the newspaper articles from the poems, the newly updated websites from the 1995 updates, the working link from the broken one. He treats Google well and Google treats him well. But he knows he is asking a lot this time.

“Hold your head up, you silly girl, look what you’ve done.”

The first website gives a number of suggestions.

- Put on socks to bed. The weird feeling will put you to sleep.
- Get drunk on Henry James (specifically).
- Remember some crazy sexual experience.
- Drink a cup of coffee. Stan mentally notes all suggestions.

The second website offers other routes to salvation.

- Avoid caffeine.
- Arrange to have sex with your mate before going to sleep.
- Try deep breathing. Stan refuses to remember these.

The third website delivers this information:

- Avoid alcohol.
- See a doctor if your problem continues.
- Do your best to be in the most silent environment possible.

“I wonder should I call you but I know what you’d do.”

Stan ponders on what suggestion to try out first. His sock drawer is right by him. He removes a multicolored pair and proceeds to put them on. But a genius idea halts his endeavor – “if I want a strange sensation” thinks the Google-believer, “might as well put these socks over my hands and arms”.

3:40. Eyes wide-open, hot hands and a thousand thoughts racing through his mind. He has been let down by Google. If the solution had worked, he would not think

such thoughts and Google would remain unquestioned. “How embarrassing, good thing no one’s here... good things she’s not here!” ‘She’ is, of course, the girl Stan had a secret crush on. “What would she think if she saw me with my multicolor” – and before Stan can finish his thought he quickly removes the socks off his hands.

“You know I’d give you everything I got for a little piece of mind!”

A crazy sexual experience – Stan sets himself comfortably under the warm covers and turns on his internal-mind cinema. “Stan Productions Presents, A Stan movie – Stan & Margaret– Starring Stan & Margaret”. Stan’s eyes are closed as the vivid images unreel in front of him. Summer camp, four years ago, New York State. Stan’s dressed as Groucho Marx, he even took the time to lie about his age and buy a cigar at the shop around the corner. Stan finds Margaret alone in front of a stream. “Will you marry me? Did he leave you any money? Answer the second question first”, smirks Stan. Margaret turns around and coaxes out a snobbish air: “He left me his entire fortune”. Stan approaches, raises his eyebrows and says “Is that so? Can’t you see what I’m trying to tell you? I love you!” Margaret can’t help but smile. He -

Stan opens his eyes, drops of sweat pouring down his forehead. Too weird! Damn the site suggesting socks and memories! He gets out of bed and walks rapidly to the kitchen. He opens the liquor cabinet and checks: Chivas, Jack Daniel, Middleton, Johnny Walker, Legacy, Black Prince... no Henry James... no Henry James! Exasperated, Stan walks back to his room.

3:53. He stares at the slightly pulsing alarm clock. “*Good night sleep tight.*” Stan approaches the alarm clock.

“Dream sweet dreams for you.

Good night good night everybody

Everybody everywhere.

Good night.”

Stan’s mouth is open, trying to reach the carpet. He finally brings his finger to lower the volume control from ‘maxi’ to ‘5’. The DJ’s voice stops yelling and chirpily

declares *“There it was for you folks, exclusively on FATY radio – The complete White album with no publicity cuts!”*

Stan turns off the radio and heads back to bed. Before he drops his head onto the pillow, he glances at The Screen. “Do your best to be in the most silent environment possible.”

Google had not failed him.