

Extract from Act One Scene Two of 'Googled Out!' by David Weedall

**The action of the play takes place in cyberspace on the 'Enhance' 3D Website,
in the near future.**

(As the lights rise, PETRA (F) is sat, frozen in one position looking at her palm-held devise. A 'cyberspace entrance sound' can be heard. Then the voice of a man can be heard off)

MARLIN (M): *(Off in the distance)* Greetings!! Hail, to one and all! Can anyone hear my splendid voice or see my striking figure? *(MARLIN enters and immediately notices PETRA who is seated with her back to him. MARLIN is dressed in the apparel of a medieval war lord and carries a sword in hand and a dagger in his belt)* Greetings, oh fairest of the fair... for I am here!! Destined to meet with you, or so I do believe...! *(He walks over to PETRA)* Well... here am !!

PETRA: *(Swings round in his chair to face her as the lights rise)* Ah... hello. My name's Petra, welcome to 'Enhance'. Yes, I do believe we've been expecting you....

MARLIN: Expecting me? Well, my lady, here I am!!

PETRA: So I see....

MARLIN: *(Looking himself up and down)* Well, what do you think of my avatar?

PETRA: It's different.

MARLIN: Didn't take long to create... I replicated the one I use in Online gaming on EverQuest! I came across you completely by chance...

PETRA: Really?...

MARLIN: I was fighting and then surfing the mighty tsunamis of the south! When every mighty mega - wave seemed to wash me nearer to your site!

PETRA: And just how did you get into this mode of living....?

MARLIN: I beg your pardon, my ladyship?

PETRA: How did you get to give your life to this?

MARLIN: You what? *(He looks himself up and down and laughs)* Oh yes, I see... this! Why, through the Mighty God Google of course!

PETRA: Yes, of course! How silly of me to even ask!

MARLIN: No, not ASK. Google! The God of all search engines!

PETRA: So you are?

MARLIN: Yes....I AM!!

PETRA: Your name? What is your name?

MARLIN: Why... Marlin, the Mighty Warlord of the North!

PETRA: You what?

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MARLIN: Marlin, the Mighty Warlord of the North!

PETRA: Yes I think I got that! But who are you really?

MARLIN: I'm Marlin, the...

PETRA: ... Mighty Warlord of the North! You have a problem.....

MARLIN: To Marlin, all problems are overcome through combat, utilizing my mighty indomitable strength, agility and power!

PETRA: That's just the problem.

MARLIN: Marlin overcomes and conquers all problems! Anyway, I've registered in advance...

PETRA: Is that so? So how long have you been....? Please, do put that sword down!

MARLIN: The Great Warrior of the North would never put aside his lethal weapon, lest in a moment of vulnerability, the enemy should turn in upon him and thereby wreak havoc and destruction!

PETRA: Just put the thing down!

MARLIN: *(Laughing)* What, and make myself vulnerable?

PETRA: A little vulnerability might go a long way!

MARLIN: What's the matter with you? Why won't you confront me in mortal combat?

PETRA: I'm not going to confront you at all! We just need to delve a little beyond that facade, to find the real you...

MARLIN: You see the real mighty Marlin before you!

PETRA: You know I'm sure that lurking beneath that frosty exterior, exists a real person? Now, just tell me your real name!

MARLIN: I am Marlin the...

PETRA: No! I want your real... offline name! The name you were born with.

MARLIN: *(He looks dejected)* What's the matter? Why won't you play?

PETRA: Tell me your name and just how long you've been living out this ridiculous fantasy?

MARLIN: Fantasy?

PETRA: According to my records, you've been playing this game for three and a half years, during which time you've lost... four jobs and... three and a half girlfriends?

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MARLIN: Look, who are you and how come you know so much about me?

PETRA: I think the question really is ... who exactly are you and how come, being so aware of your own predicament, you do so little to resolve it?

MARLIN: Look, I was attracted to your site 'cause it said, "Enhance Your Online Gaming Skills!" And that's what it's all about... just honing your skills... and then on to the next level!

PETRA: The goal being what exactly...?

MARLIN: Why... Level Seventy Five of course!

PETRA: Recognition is important to you?

MARLIN: It isn't to you?

PETRA: We all... need a little now and again, for sure. It's just when you get addicted, that it becomes a problem.

MARLIN: You're a psychologist?

PETRA: It's your identity I believe we are discussing, and why you can't quit your compulsive tendencies to...

MARLIN: *(There appears a marked change in his demeanor)* It's simple for you to say that, but it's not as easy as it might sound! I can't stop... not just like that! There's always some new thing to explore; mission to accomplish; realm to fantasize about. Sure, I've managed to quit on and off but then I come right back to it harder than ever and binge myself beyond belief! I seem to withdraw completely from everyone... including the three and a half girlfriends you mention... oh... and the four jobs! It's not what I want in my life, but perhaps replacing something... I can't get elsewhere.

PETRA: The recognition for which you so crave?

MARLIN: The buzz you get from online gaming is fantastic! Far better than any kick you can get from having a Nintendo Wii – and that's not toilet humour! I've progressed to Level Fifty Nine as Marlin, the Mighty Warrior of the North! In the game... I am awesome, majestic, and revered by many!

PETRA: And in real life, you feel a nobody?

MARLIN: You lie... and don't go into work because of 'stuff you had to do at home'... you refuse invitations to go out because 'of deadlines you had to meet at work.' You spend no time at all watching TV... that's the one positive... whilst 'EverQuest' takes over more and more of your life! I've lost too many girlfriends over the years by just getting into bed with them... almost at the very moment... that they were just getting up!

PETRA: And when confronted by them... you become... hostile?

MARLIN: You already know far too much...

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PETRA: Keep your priorities straight... remembering that people are more important than objects and reality is more important than virtual life!

MARLIN: That's easily said!

PETRA: So how many hours a day are you participating in this fantasy world?

MARLIN: I don't keep a record...

PETRA: No, but in round figures?

MARLIN: Ten... maybe twelve...

PETRA: And?...

MARLIN: Sixteen, maybe eighteen to twenty at worst! The chat features keep you so busy and the competitive thing makes it harder to stop, whilst the respect from others is addictive! But each new skill just isn't enough... you just want to gain more and more!

PETRA: And what's happened in your 'real life' when you actually manage to tear yourself away from the game?

MARLIN: You realise you haven't moved on... you're just stuck where you were before you logged on, some eighteen hours previously! I know guys who haven't left the house in five years... or even longer!

PETRA: Then surely, the one way to restore sanity... would be to ensure your gaming avatar gets killed off!

MARLIN: The Mighty Marlin will never die! To suggest such a thing...

PETRA: Er... hello?

MARLIN: Oh... yeah...! Look... the people I've seen quit by destroying their character... come back and play even harder than before! There's currently around a million players of 'EverQuest' alone!

PETRA: But only a tiny percentage become obsessed like you? Look, you're very tired. You haven't slept in three or four nights and you need to relax... unwind...chill out... dial down... take it easy... *(She pours him a glass of fluid)* Here... drink this.... It's a... 'a virtual gaming potion' that will increase your online status by five levels!.

MARLIN: Marlin would never take a mystery drink from a stranger! Just think of the consequences were it to be poisoned or drugged in some way!

PETRA: Take it.....

MARLIN: What is it?

PETRA: Something that will do you a great deal of good.

MARLIN: No I can't!

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PETRA: Sit down... make yourself comfortable and at ease! Drink and your ambitions will be fulfilled!

MARLIN: I really shouldn't, but there again, I do yearn for higher status! *(He drinks the whole glass during which there is a 'virtually relaxing sound effect')* Ah great! You're right! I'm just feeling so very much more... relaxed!

PETRA: Splendid! Now, I do believe that for the first time in three or four nights... you're starting to feel calm... tranquil... stress-free...unperturbed. *(She goes to refill his glass.)*

MARLIN: No...really.... not another! Although I have to say, I'm feeling very calm!

PETRA: That's right... enjoy! Unwind... slow down... let go... loosen up! Let it all go... and flow!

MARLIN: Am I really here? Where is the Marlin in me, is he here or ...

PETRA: ...somewhere else altogether?

MARLIN: How is it that you know so much? Who exactly are you?

PETRA: You don't need to worry about that. Not at all!

MARLIN: But I.... *(He yawns and flops back in the chair)*

PETRA: However, before you get yourself too comfortable...I do believe we've put you in room number...let's see. *(She checks her palm held device)* Yes that's it! Room number eleven. Through the door and take the lift to the first floor. Turn left out of the lift and your room is the fifth on the left!

MARLIN: *(Drowsily)* Through door... lift... left out of... fifth on left!

PETRA: That's it!

MARLIN: Right, thanks. I'll be on my way then, following your...impeccy... pecc...able directions! *(He gets up and staggers toward the exit)*

(The Lights Fade)

'Googled Out!' is an absurd comedy for six actors (3f 3m) with an approx running time of 60 mins. It was written to be easily produced with very few props and minimal furniture on a low budget.

The play was first performed at the Brighton Fringe Festival 2002 and then at the Etcetera Theatre, London.

'What a fantastic play! The production is slick and lively!' Brighton Life

PDF Copies are £5.00.

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