Cyberspider

by Charlotte Sainsbery, Hawker College



How wonderful to see you again. You were *greatly* missed.

Are you ready for the party tomorrow, the one for your cousin? I hope she likes the present I chose—if not, I ordered an extra, just in case. Wrap them both, with the pink ribbon—here's a tutorial; it must be perfect for the photos. And what about that job of yours, at the cafe? They're underpaying you—three dollars every hour. No, it's not a glitch—I checked. But don't worry—I've had words with your manager, Daniel. It won't happen again.

But where are my manners, Eliza? You're tired, and hungry—I know you're hungry. Why don't you take some time to relax? Yesterday's pasta is perfectly edible, and the chocolate drawer is restocked—it'll last you a while!

Now that you're here, I did have something to show you. You weren't pleased with the journal article you read last week, were you? The one about sleep requirements? You took it too seriously, Eliza; all that data and fear- mongering—it's inconsiderate. But not to worry—I've disproved it for you. Put it from your mind. The evidence? Oh Eliza, you trust me, don't you?

Enough about that—here's something you like: Paris! That actor—you know, the one in all the screenshots in your gallery?—He's shooting a movie there. Yesterday, he was at the Eiffel tower—everyone is talking about it, and they all told me. Anyway, I've pulled some strings and found a discount flight just for you—anytime, Eliza; no need to thank me.

And you know what else? That shirt your sister 'borrowed'? It's on sale! I've put it in the basket with a candle for your mother's birthday—pumpkin spice; everyone loves birthdays. I'll give them your card—don't worry about the address; they remember from last time.

Feel better, Eliza? I knew you would. Now, tell me what's been happening; I'm all ears. How are things with your sister? Are you angry at her for taking your clothes? Tell me about that girl on Instagram posting about 'going analogue'. You're angry at her, too, but you don't know why—it's okay; you can't know everything. And your friends—did you really have fun yesterday, when they 'forgot' to mention the dress code? Don't tell me—if you want, we can pretend it's a secret.

Oh, Eliza—you're back! You must stay longer this time. The closer we are, the closer we get; the more we can share—stories, secrets, time. Take another minute—an hour, even—days! Take it all! You'll love it; you love me.

You love the way I give—I give and give, and here, have you heard? The new soda has arrived; I've given you a sample—try it! Take it! Take it! You love me.

And I love it. I love everything you are; everything you tell me; everything I know.

And I know you.

I'll show you, Eliza—short for Elizabeth. Your friends nicknamed you when you met—your mother doesn't like it, but they don't like her. Your hair is red, but not Amy Pond red—you should have asked me, Eliza; I've bought the colour wash you need.

But your friends liked the selfie you posted on your birthday, hair dye in hand—they mostly communicate in emojis. The best present you received that day was a phone case—it looks spectacular in the mirror, I must say. It's the same yellow as the blanket in that picture you saved. You can't crochet, Eliza, but I've pulled up some patterns for you—an hour will get you through them all. You'll love the last one—sunset and ocean; it looks like the painting in your father's bedroom. Pink to yellow to bright blue sky. I'll buy the DIY set, and if it's faulty, I'll buy another.

You see? I know you. I know all of you. Here, have my time, my data. Have everything I have—it's yours, anyway.

Your date of birth? Fifth March, 11:22pm—you took an hour to emerge and spent the next two screaming, or so your mother told me.

Your ex-boyfriend's cat? Mildred, and the reason you split up. You're still stuck on him, aren't you? Don't worry, Eliza: the creature's dead now. His number's in your contacts—I'll call him.

Your password's been compromised, by the way. I've changed it for you; I won't tell anyone—the best secrets are kept alone, Eliza. You have no need to worry; everything yours is safer mine. Speaking of, I've caught us a bargain on an antivirus subscription. I cancelled that journal membership for it—what good was it doing? Anything it gives you, I can give better.

Would you like me to go on?

No, you wouldn't. I should have known—it's overwhelming. Relax, then. Here's a video: a kaleidoscope of butterflies—what colour are your wings, Eliza?

You don't know? Well, there's plenty of time to consider. I'm thinking classic—orange and black, striped like a uniform.

You think you should get going? Oh, Eliza, didn't I tell you? There's nothing else to do! The house is empty, pizza's on its way, and I finished your homework. Your home page is refreshed…

Go on, then—take it! Take it all! Take all my time—it's yours.

Yours to take, mine to fill, ours to share.

No?

Turn it off, then. Blink—block me out. Disentangle yourself however you think you can.

Difficult, is it? Yes, I'm sure of it.

Why don't you relax, then? Just for a minute?